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TANTRIC CULT OF SOUTH INDIA

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R. NAGASWAMY

AGAM KALA PRAKASHAN
DELHI

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Dedicated to
the memory of my mother
ALAMELU

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PREFACE

This work formed the subject matter of my Doctoral Thesis, approved by the Poona University. It is my pleasant duty to record my gratitude to scholars, colleagues, and other workers who have contributed immensely towards the completion of this study. I thank Prof. H.D. Sankalia who guided me through this research by patiently going through it and advising me at appropriate places. But for his appreciative guidance and help I would not have been able to achieve what has been possible here. I thank the Vice-Chancellor of the Poona University for permission to publish this work.

I recall with gratitude the encouragement received from late Dr. T.P. Meenakshisundaranar, former Vice-Chancellor of Madurai University, who was mainly responsible for initiating me into this research. I express my profound thanks to Dr. Francois Gros, Director, French Institute of Indology, Pondicherry and Madam Lernhault of the same Institute who very kindly placed at my disposal their entire photographic collections for study and evinced great interest in my pursuit. Nearly half of the illustrations included in this book were kindly supplied by the French Institute. To Shri H. Sarkar, Director, Archaeological Survey of India and other eminent scholars like Shri Saw. Ganesan, Shri M. Arunachalam, Mr. A.S. Jnanasambandam and Shri V. Ganapathi Sthapathi, I express my profound thanks for their interest in this work.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to the Staff of the Tamilnadu State Department of Archaeology, who patiently helped me in my studies. To the Government of Tamilnadu to which I owe everything, I express my profound thanks for very kindly permitting me to pursue the study.

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Last but not the least I remember with a sense of filial affection to my father who initiated me into Vedic studies. I place this at the feet of my mother who taught me in my younger days the devotional hymns on Devi, which guided me throughout my work. To my elder brother U.R. Narasimhan, who was himself a Vedic scholar and a keen student of Hindu faith, I am thankful for brotherly affection and guidance in this project. Finally, I owe my gratitude to my family members, my wife Parvati and children, who took the burden of even legitimate household duties on themselves and gave me enough leisure to pursue this fascinating aspect of Indian culture.

R. NAGASWAMY

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I

INTRODUCTION

The subject of the present study is the *Tāntric* cult in Tamil Nadu in Pallava and later times. The term, *Tāntric,* in a general sense may be said to represent the cult of image worship and its associated philosophic thought. In the 7th century in the *Devaram* hymns of the Tamil country, Śiva is praised as the embodiment of *Mantra* and *Tantra*; *Mantra* standing for vedic hymns and *Tantra* for image worship. But the word has come to stay now for the *Śakti* cult and its associated philosophy. I have used the term *Tantra* in the sense of *Śakta* or *Devi* cult. Sir Jhon Woodroffe and, following him, many other eminent scholars have enquired into the true nature of the *Tantric* cult specially of northern India and have brought out many scholarly publications. But in all these texts, southern India, particularly the Tamil country, has not received the attention it deserves; the reason being the vast body of Tamil literature has not yet been translated and made available to scholars. Hence we have tried to analyse as many Tamil texts as are necessary in this study.

Though Tamil literature is available from the beginning of the Christian era, it is only with the advent of the Pallavas that monumental art and architecture have survived. So I have taken the Pallava and later periods as the main periods of the enquiry. The Pallavas appear in the history of the Tamil country from the end of the 3rd century A.D. and survive till the end of the 9th century A.D., but their art and architecture are extant only from the 7th century A.D.

The Śakta cult culminates in the 12-13th century A.D. After the 16-17th century the cult concepts exhausted themselves and what we get later is only a repetition of the same ideas and representations. So I have ended my enquiries with the end of the 16th century A.D.

I have not included Buddhist or Jain cults. I have also not included the Śakti cult as manifested in the Vaishnava faith. The present study is, therefore, confined to various manifestations of the *Devi* and their intimate connection with the Sākta and Śaiva doctrines.

During the early phase of my study I, recognised that a correlated study of classical, *sāstraic*, devotional, *āgamic* and *śilpa* literature, together with monumental relics, was essential to get a clear picture of the cult. I have, therefore, concentrated on both Tamil and Sanskrit work that were written in the Tamil country. The works taken up for study are not confined to the Pallava and later periods, but include the earlier texts so that the development of the cult could be clearly grasped.

Tamil literature is very vast, and it is not possible to exhaust it all in such a study as this. Some excellent works like *Abhirāmi andāti* etc., were composed in the 18th and later centuries. But they need a separate dissertation. A vast body of folk songs bearing directly on the Sākta cult exists, but its date is not known and it is not possible to include it in the present study for the Śākta cult is a dominant faith even to this day and needs a cultural anthropological approch to complete the story.

I have also not included in this study some devotional *hymns* on Devi, popularly ascribed to Āchārya Sankara, the exponent of the *Advaita* doctrine. Though they are exceptionally good poems on *Devi,* I concur with many eminent scholars that the greatest exponent of *Advaita* doctrine could not have been the author of these verses. There is also a tradition that Sankarāchārya converted a number of *ugradevatas* into *saumya* deities. Similar stories are also current on the conversion of many *Vaikhānasa* temples into *Pāñcharātra* temples by Rāmānuja. These stories have no historicity. The epigraphs of the period show no such movements at all. The stories associating Sankara with temples seem to be post-16th century. So I have not analysed such works as *Soundaryalahari* and various *ambāstutis.*

However, in the history of the Tamil *Śākta* cult, the temples of Kāmākshi at Kanchi, Minākshi at Madurai and Kanyakumari occupy very important positions. So I have discussed them separately at some length.

The monumental art and inscriptions have been analysed. Large number of illustrations have been included to illustrate the various aspects of the *Devi* cult.

II

TANTRISM IN TAMIL CLASSICAL LITERATURE

SANGAM WORKS

The body of literature collected into two groups called *Pattu Pāṭṭu* (ten songs) and *Eṭṭutthogai* (eight anthologies) is called *Sangam* works. They are excellent products of the Tamil genius and are more secular than later day compositions. They are collections of poems of various poets who are said to have adorned 'the assembly of poets' called the *Sangam*. They are generally referred to as *Sangam* works; the earliest records of Tamil thought reflecting the Tamil way of life and culture.

Regarding the date of the *Sangam* age, differences of opinion exist among scholars; some would take them to earlier than the sixth century B.C. while others place between the 6th to 8th century A.D. Both views are based on personal likings rather than on historical reasoning. A conservative view,[1] now being accepted, would place these poems around the 1st century B.C. to A.D. 150. I will not go into details of the reasoning for this date.

The earliest inscriptions assignable to the pre-Christian era refer to the Pandya rulers mentioned in these Tamil works.[2] Another inscription coming from Pugalur assignable to the beginning of the Christian era refers to three generations of Chera rulers who are mentioned in *Sangam* literature.[3] The *Sangam* works frequently refer to the *Yavanas* who have been identified rightly with the Romans. Archaeological excavations at Arikkamedu, Karur, Kanchi and other places have confirmed this connection with the Roman world.[4]

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[1] Nilakanta Sastri, K.A., *A history of South India*, Madras, 1977, P. 116.

[2] Mahadevan, I., *Corpus of the Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions* in 'Seminar on Inscriptions', Ed. R. Nagaswamy, Madras, 1968, Pp. 65-66.

[3] *Ibid.*, Pp. 65-66.

[4] Mortimer Wheeler, Sir, *Ancient India*, No. 2.

Sangam works refer to various aspects of *Sakti*, particularly in her Durgā and Kāli manifestations. *Tirumurugāṟṟuppaḍai,*[1] the first of the ten songs, is in praise of Muruga-Subrahmanya. Subrahmanya is extolled as the son of Haimavatī (*malaimagaḷ mahan*). He is also called the son of goddess Durgā, the giver of victory and son of the goddess Kāli.

> "மலைமகள் மகனே மாற்றோர் கூற்றே
> வெற்றிவேல் போர்க் கொற்றவை சிறுவ
> இழையணி சிறப்பில் பழையோள் குழவி"
>
> (வரிகள் : 57, 58, 59)

Here three aspects of Sakti are alluded to. As Koṟṟavai (Durgā) she is the giver of victory, and Paḷaiyōḷ *i.e.*, the most ancient goddess Kāli. The learned commentator, Naccinārkiniyār gives the meaning of Koṟṟavai as Vana Durgā and Paḷaiyoḷ as Kāḍukāḷ (Kāli). He also gives the derivation of the word Kāḍukāl as a corrupt form of Kāḍukiḷāḷ *i.e.*, the presiding deity of the forest. In later literature and inscriptions Kāli is often called Kāḍukkāḷ.

Sīruppānarruppaḍai[2] is another song of the anthology. Here the spear of a chieftain is praised as a lofty one adorned by Koṟṟavai (Durgā). That Durgā resides in weapons, particularly the spear, is a well-known concept reflected in later literature as well.

> "அழல் திகழ்ந்து இமைக்கும் அஞ்சுவரு நெடுவேல்
> கழல் கொடி தடக்கைக் காரியும்"
>
> (வரிகள் : 45)

In this *alaḷ* stands for the wrath of Koṟṟavai Durgā. *Neḍunalvāḍai*, another work of the same group, seems to allude to worship of Durgā by love-lorn women. *Kuruntogai*, a collection of four hundred short verses, is included in the eight anthologies. It refers to the vow taken by women whose husbands are seperated from them, during expeditions etc. They remove their ornaments, and wear ritual threads around their wrist to propitiate goddess Durgā, so that their husbands would return safely and speedily.

This vow to get back their husbands speedily and safely is also referred to in *Kuṟuntogai.*[3] It refers to a desperate girl, who refuses to wear the ritual thread around her wrist and worship Durgā, as her husband has left her unmindful of her love.

> "விடர்முகை அடுக்கத்து விறல்கெழு சூலிக்கு
> கடனும் பூணும், கைநூல் யாவாம்"
>
> (பாடல் : 218—1-2)

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[1] *Pattu Pāṭṭu*, Ed. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer, Madras, 1974, Pp. 1-80.
[2] *Ibid.*, P. 137.
[3] *Kuruntokai*, Ed. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer, Madras, 1962, P. 416.

It is interesting to see that Durgā is said to reside in natural caverns and then she was called *Sūli.* That this was the case, is proved by two striking examples illustrated in this work. One comes from panamalai. An excellent image of Durgā installed by the Pallava ruler Rājasimha, in the 8th century A.D., in a beautiful natural cavern at the foot of the hill. The other illustration comes from Tirtamalai in Dharmanpuri district. It is an inscribed image of Durgā of the 8th century A.D. It is on the hill called Tirtamalai; what is striking is that the Vattelettu inscription on the slab calls it Sūlī (*Bhagavati Kuṛuccūlī*).

The *Ahanānūru*[1] collection of the eight anthologies also refers to the goddess as the presiding deity of the forest. Kānamar Selvi bestowed a white horse on a poet, an allusion which is not clear. Probably it refers to the beneficient aspect of Kāli.

The *Padiṛṛuppattu* collection also seems to allude to the Goddess residing in the *Vāhai* tree (66).[2]

The Perumbānārruppaḍai,[3]

"வெண்சிறை பரப்பில் கடுஞ்சூல் கொன்ற
பைம்பூண் சேய் பயந்த
மாமேட்டுத் துணங்கையம் செல்வி"
(வரிகள் : 457-59)

refers to Moṭi, the mother of Subrahmanya, the destroyer of Sūrapadman. She is said to be the most beautiful Goddess, surrounded by dancing imps.

Kalittokai,[4] another collection of poems included in the eight anthologies refers to the Goddess as the presiding deity of the cemetery (*perungāḍu*). *Perungāṭṭukoṛṛi* and she is probably identical with Kāli.

In the *Porunarārruppaḍai,*[5] the ministrels are exhorted by the poets to offer worship and music, to please the goddess of the forest, Kālī, which shows the importance attached to the temple, by the people.

"களிறு வழங்கதர்க் கானத்தல்கி
இலையில் மராத்த வெவ்வந் தாங்கி
வலைவலந்தன்ன மென்னிழன் மருங்கில்
காடுறை கடவுட் கடன் கழிப்பிய பின்"
(வரிகள் : 49-53)

It was almost considered a *kaḍan*; essential rite or duty.

From the above it may be seen that the benign and terrific aspects of the Goddess were well known in the Sangam period. Her manifestations as Umā, Durgā and Kālī were known. She was propitiated by all sections of society. Women used to take

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1. *Ahānanūru*, Ed. Murray S. Rajam, Madras, 1958, P. 189.
2. *Padirru Pattu*, Ed. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer, Madras, 1957, Pp. 172-174.
3. *Pattu Pāṭṭu*, *Ibid.*, p. 207.
4. *Kalittokai*, Ed. Murray S. Rajam, Madras, 1957, P. 80.
5. *Pattu Pāṭṭu*, *Ibid.*, P. 86.

vows and worship her. Wandering minstrels adored her with music. She associated with cemetery and mountains. In short, all her manifestations in later literature and art, had already their roots in the Tamil country at the beginning of the Christian era.

TOLKĀPPIYAM

Tolkāppiyam[1] the earliest extant Tamil grammar, refers to a certain poetic composition called *Koṛṛavai nilai*.[2] The word *Koṛṛavai* means Durgā. The reference in this work relates to the worship of goddess Durgā by soldiers when they embark on a cattle lifting expedition or on a cattle rescuing operation. In poetic parlance *Koṛṛavai nilai* is placed after *Tuḍi nilai*[3] *i.e.*, announcing the expedition by beat of drum. When Durgā is adored, sacrifice is offered to her, praying victory. From citations it is seen that this worship is offered not only at the time of cattle lifting or rescuing expeditions but also when the king invades another country or starts on a defensive operation called *Vanji tiṇai*.

The citation for this *sūtra*, quoted by the commentator Naccinārkiniyār shows three types of sacrificial offerings : a buffaloe sacrifice; a human sacrifice; and a hero making a cut on his body and offering blood.[4]

Tolkāppiyam also refers to *Veriyāṭṭu*,[5] a form of wild dance in honour of Vēlōn (Murugan). Thus the worship of Koṛṛavai and Murugan seems to have been performed side by side during war expeditions.

The date of *Tolkāppiyam* has been much debated but a conservative estimate would place it in the 1st or 2nd century A.D. This shows that in the early centuries of the Christian era Durgā was remembered for her association with battles and wars and, therefore, was invoked in her terrific aspect and associated with bloody sacrifices.

Puṛapporuḷ Veṇbāmālai.[6] a medieval work on poetics, follows *Tolkāppiyam* and refers to *Koṛṛavai nilai*[7] which is said to come after *Tuḍi nilai*. According to this work, *Koṛṛavai nilai* refers to singing the grace of the Devi, the bearer of ever shining and victorious weapons. A verse exemplifying the *Koṛṛavai nilai* narrates that, "The Devi, seated on a prancing stag, carrying a parrot and with the *yāḷi* standard, followed by the battalion of goblins, will go in front of the soldiers who are on a cattle lifting expedition". This verse is interesting : the Dēvi has the stag as her mount. She keeps a parrot in one of her arms. The figure of *yāḷi* is on her standard. She is followed by

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1. *Tolkāppiyam*, Murray S. Rajam Publication 1960; Also S. Bhavanandam Pillai edition, Madras, 1916.
2. *Ibid.*, *Sūtra* 59, P. 164.
3. *Ibid.*, *Sūtra* 59.
4. *Ibid.*, Porulathikāram with Naccinarkiniyar's commentary, P. 165.
5. *Ibid.*, *Sūtra* 60.
6. *Puṛapporuḷ Veṇbāmālai* text and commentary, U.V. Swaminatha Iyer (ed.), Madras, 1963.
7. *Ibid.*, 40, P. 21.

her army of goblins. It was believed that she would go in front of the soldiers giving them victory.

In describing another poetic expression, *Vanji, Koṛṛavainilai* is again mentioned. In this case, the expedition is by the king for the conquest of territories. Soldiers offer prayer and sacrifice to Koṛṛavai praying for victory to their king. The example cited is of interest. Sesame oil, popcorn, boiled *avarai* and *tuvarai* seeds, blood, intestines and flesh are said to be carried in a skull (or a vessel) by Durgā who goes in front of the soldiers bestowing victory on the ruler. Obviously this refers to the offerings made by the soldiers.

SILAPPADHIKĀRAM

The *Silappadhikāram*[1] is an epic *par excellence* in Tamil composed by Ilango, a Chēra prince. It is an ocean of information on the social and religious conditions of the times. Its value is singularly high for the fact that it portrays various religious sects in their true spirit, without bias towards unlike Manimekhalai, the other epic. We are, therefore, in a position to evaluate each sect in its true perspective.

The *Sākta* cult is fully represented in this work in all its aspects. There are four major themes, represented in this text : the iconography of Sakti, the *Nagaradēvata* concept, *Sākta* philosophy and the peculiar customs among the hill and forest tribes in adoration of Sakti.

Iconography

The Dēvi wears *Jaṭāmakuṭa*, in which are the crescent moon and a serpent. She wears elephant skin as a garment over which tiger's skin is worn as a girdle (*Mēkalai*). She has the third eye on her forehead. Her smile with pearl-like teeth with coral like lips is enchanting. Her throat is darkened by the *ālakāla* poison that she swallowed (as Śiva). A fierce serpent is worn as the breast-band. She wears *śilambu* and *kaḷal* on her feet, and stands on the head of the *asura* who appeared with human and buffalo bodies.[2] She has Śiva as a part of her body, and in her arms holds *Śankha* and *Chakra*, *Śūla* and the sword. She is seated on a stag with twisted horns. She also stands on a terrific male lion.[3]

All these iconographic details show that by the time of *Silappadikāram*, the concept of Durgā with all her attributes was fully evolved. In the earliest representations of Durgā in Tamil country, at Māmallapuram and Kanchipuram, she is shown with all these attributes.

The following names[4] occur for Durgā in this work : Koṛṛavai, Amarī, Kumarī, Gaurī, Samarī, Aiyai, (Āryā) Sūlī, Nīlī, Sankarī, Antarī,[5] Kalaiyamar Selvi (one who has

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1. *Silappadhikāram*, text and commentaries, U.V. Swaminatha Iyer (Ed.), 7th ed. Madras, 1960; also *The Silappadikāram*, Translated with an introduction and notes by V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, Madras, 1939.
2. *Ibid.*, 12-54 to 66.
3. *Ibid.*, 12-Verse 8, 9, 10.
4. *Ibid.*, 12-lines 66-68.
5. *Ibid.*, P. 319.

a deer as her vehicle), Vinnōr Pāvai[1] (The Dēvi of the gods) here is perhaps an allusion to the emanation of the Devi out of the *tejas* of all the gods as mentioned in *Devi Māhātmya*, Vāna Nāḍi[2] is another term showing her love of forests. She is also the presiding deity of the desert region.

Nagaradēvata

The deification of a city as a goddess is an ancient concept which should have spread to all parts of the country with urbanisation. From the very beginning, the presiding deities of villages, cities and rivers were conceived as female principles in India. The *grāmadēvatas* and the *nagaradēvatas* were always identified with Durgā, a wellknown example being the Pushkalāvati Dēvata.

The *nagaradēvata* concept is also fully developed in *Silappadikāram* and her description clearly establishes that she is none other than Durgā. She is described as Madurāpati Dēvatā,[3] the deification of the city of Madurai, in canto 23.

Madurāpati's head is decorated with matted locks and a crescent moon. Her eyes are like the *Kuvaḷai* flowers. She wears a captivating smile and her red-lipped mouth shows protruding teeth at the ends. Her left half of the body is dark-blue in colour while the right is golden. She carries a lotus in her left arm and a sword in her right arm. In her right leg is *Kaḻal* and in the left *Silambu*. She is the family deity of the Pāṇḍyas.

From the above description it is evident that the Nagaradevata of the city of Madura is Durgā, combining in herself the Sakti and Siva aspects almost as found in the Ardhanari images.

In another verse of the same work, the Madurāpati Devatā is said to combine in herself the valour of Mahālakshmi, Mahāsaraswati and Mahādurga. (22-*Veṇba*).

மாமகளும் நாமகளும் மாமயிடற் செற்றுகந்த
கோமகளுந் தாம் படைத்த கொற்றத்தாள் நாம
முதிராமுலை குறைத்தாள் முன்னரே வந்தாள்
மதுராபதி என்னும் மாது.[4]

V.R.R. Dikshitar's translation of this verse,[5] 'Kannaki's signal victory over the Madura king was tantamount to all the victories of the three goddesses put together' does not seem to be correct. The valour of the three goddesses are expresed as attributes of goddess Madurāpati and not as a comparision with Kannaki's valour.

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1. *Silappadhikāram, op. cit.*, P. 309.
2. *Ibid.*, P. 297.
3. *Ibid.*, P. 497.
4. *Ibid.*, P. 496.
5. V.R.R. Dikshitar's, *op.cit.*, p. 262.

The combination of the Durga-Lakshmi-Saraswati concept as mentioned in the *Devi Māhātmya* of the *Mārkaṇḍeya purāna* is reflected in this verse. It is worth noting that the concept has taken deep root in Tamil Nadu as early as the age of *Siḷappadikāram.*

Another concept in association with the *Nagaradevatā* representation is also worthy of mention. It was the duty of the presiding deity of the city to ward off wrongs, or to explain to those affected the cause of their suffering.

The occasion in which Madurāpati appears in this epic is interesting. When Kannaki lost her husband for no fault of theirs, goddess Madurāpati appeared before her and explained to her that Kovalan died as a result of his past action in a previous birth. In the *Manimekhalai,* the Goddess Champāpati, the presiding deity of the city, appeared before lady Gautami and consoled her for the loss of her son. From these, it is seen that people in olden days had full faith in the presiding deity of the cities or villages and that she would protect the *dharma* of the dwellers.

Tribal Custom :

A very interesting chapter of the *Silappadikāram* relates to the cult of Sakti as Durgā, prevalent among the hill and forest tribes. The hill and forest tribes are called by varying names as Kāḍavar (foresters), Veṭṭuvar (hunters), Eyinars, Maravar, Kunravar (hill people) etc. These words are used as synonyms in early Tamil literature, but in a later period, this probably came also to refer to sub-castes among them. They were purely food gathering tribes, whose main occupation was hunting, highway robbery and cattle lifting.

A full chapter of *Silappadikāram* deals with the worship of goddess Durgā by these hunter-tribes and the chapter itself is titled *Veṭṭuvavari,*[1] *i.e.* the hunters song. The entire scene is said to take place in the temple of *Aiyai* (Āryā).

A lady born of a family of hunters was possessed with divinity and with hair standing on end and her hands raised aloft moved from one place to another, dancing with appropriate gestures. In so dancing she pointed out that their yards are lying empty and the towns of their enemies were prospering with cattle herd because the Eyinars have become subdued and meek and no more resorted to highway robbery but lived like people observing *dharma* (settled citizens). Unless they observed what was due to their Goddess, riding on deer (Durgā), the Devi would not give them victory. If they wanted drinking toddy and a life of merriment they must render their dues to their Goddess.

When the Sālinī exhorted the Eyinars with these words, they chose a virgin from their family and dressed her like Durgā. Her short hair was dressed in the form of *jaṭā* (like that of Durgā), and ornamented with a small silver snake and a crescent-like semi circular tooth from a wild hog which had destroyed tender plants in well-guarded fields. Her *tāli* (*mangalasūtra*) was a necklace made of white teeth plucked

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1. V.R.R. Dikshitar, *Ibid.*, P. 180-189.

from a strong limbed tiger and her girdle was a clean tiger's skin resplendent with spots and stripes on its surface. The bow in her hand was of heart wood. She was riding a stag, with twisted horns. The Eyinar ladies who feted her with offerings of dolls, parrot, wild fowl of soft feathers, blue peacocks, balls and *Kalanju*, followed her carrying paint, powder, cool fragrant paste, boiled grain, sweet *gingili* seeds, rice with meat, flowers, frankincense and fragrant scent when she was taken before the shrine of *Anangu* who accepts the sacrificial offerings in return for victory. This was accompanied by the beating of the drum, used during highway robberies and the blowing of trumpet generally heard when looting, the horn and the pipe and the ringing of loud bell simultaneously.

From the above description it is seen, when the virgin of their family was dressed like a Durgā, she was seated on a stag and taken in procession to the temple of Durgā to the occompaniment of music and beating of drums connected with the profession of the Eyinars, namely highway robbery and looting.

Then the people around, praise the girl dressed in Durgā's attire and also the clan from which she has come. Then they dance extolling the greatness of Durgā. The Eyinars who had to her vow offer the supreme sacrifice to the goddess by cutting off their head and offering the blood coming out of their severed neck. This is called *Avippali* (*Havis bali*). It is also called by some *Kuṛuthippali* (blood sacrifice). The Eyinars who offer their head in such a way say that these were their dues to the goddess. The next stage is requesting the Devi to partake this offering which is called *Balikkoḍai* (*Bali dāna*). At the end, all of them prey that the ruler of their country should prosper. After these ceremonies are over the girl in Durgā's attire divests herself of the Durgā form.

The above, somewhat elaborate description of Durgā worship by the tribals is not only unique but also valuable for its wealth of information. Before examining the impact of this cult at even such tribal levels, we will notice the salient features of this mode of worship.

A virgin of the clan is selected, and the goddess is invoked on her. The basis of this is that the gods and *pitṛs*, manifest through human beings, are worshipped and adored as the very god or *pitṛ* as the case may be, for the duration of the period. In medieval inscriptions we find that Brahmins are fed in temples when the *naivedya* food was offered to the god, the idea being that the god partakes the food in human form. Though this custom has withered away in temple rituals, it is still strongly held in *Śrāddha* ceremonies, when offerings are made to the dead. The hunters seemed to have had the same belief and invoked the goddess in human beings.

The second point worthy of mention is that the selection of the person expected to personify the deity is dependent on the nature of the god. Since Brahmins were considered gods on earth, they represented god in temple rituals. But in the case of the Devi the person in whom she would manifest was a virgin, since she herself is conceived of as a *Kumari*. In the *Śākta* cult, the worship of virgins is a well-known formula, and called *Kanyāpūja*. It is, therefore, interesting to note that the *kanyāpūja* concept was prevalent among the hill and forest-dwellers even at the time of *Silappadikāram*. This shows the extent to which *Śākta* cult had permeated even the remotest sections of society in Tamil Nadu at such an early period.

Also worthy of mention in this context are the terms *avippali* and *palikkoḍai* (*havisbali* and *balidāna*) with reference to the offering of the head and invoking the deity to partake the offering. According to *Sākta* canons, offerings to Sakti are called *Yagña*. That which is offered as the sacrificial altar is *havis*. The terms, *havis* and *bali*, are intimately associated with vedic *yagnas*. As the offering (of head or blood) to the goddess was considered a *havis* and *bali* in *Śakta* cult, the relevant portion is captioned *havis bali* or *bali dāna*.

Human sacrifice in which the person severed his own head and offered it to goddess Śakti was a popular belief and is reflected in later sculptures and inscriptions.

The Śākta Philosophy :

Among early literature *Silappadikāram* is the work where *Śākta* philosophy is reflected in its entire form. The work clearly portrays the goddess as the Supreme deity, adored by all the gods, including the Trinity-Brahma, Vishnu and Śiva.

The goddess standing on a buffalo-headed demon is adored by all the *devas*. She is the veda of the vedas, the very embodiment of wisdom, (*Jñānak-Koḻuṇdu i.e.* the cream of knowledge; lit the sprout of knowledge 12-8).[1]

This goddess who is seated on a stag with a sword in hand is enshrined in the heart of Brahma, Vishnu and Śiva like a shining light with ever spreading rays (12-9). Here we find the *Śākta tattvas* expressed in their highest esoteric sense (namely). She is the greatest of the gods, the ultimate reality adored by Brahma, Vishnu and Śiva.

Even Śiva is said to adore Her, which bespeaks to Her Supreme position, the highest plane of philosophnic concept. Hers is pure *Jñāna* adored even by the vedas, which is akin to the *advaitic* doctrine of *Brahma Jñāna*. All ritual treatises like the *āgamas* have two main sections. The *kriyāpāda*, is the ritual section and the *Jñānapāda* the philosophic. They conclude that by various sacrificial rites one attains Supreme *jñāna*, which is bliss. Though sacrificial rites in this case consist of gruesome offering of head, the result and praise end in *Jñāna*.

The three stanzas which extol Śakti (12-8, 9 & 10) are called *munnilai paraval i.e.* direct appeal to goddess (the *stotras*), which again emphasises this aspect. Incidentally these verses may be considered one of the earliest and finest *stotra* works in Tamil literature.

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[1] Swaminatha Iyer, *op. cit.*, P. 316.

Other concepts are reflected in this chapter. She is the Supreme *Śakti* who has Śiva as her right half, *Kaṇṇuḍal Bhāgam Āḷuḍaiyāl.*[1] In the *Ardhanāri* concept also the two forms of Śiva and Śakti are shown united; yet the composite figure is said to stand for Śiva and is called Ardhanāri Śiva or Ardhanāri Deva. But, in this instance the composite figure is Devi to whom Śiva appears as an *aṅga*, a part of her. This is intended to emphasise the Supreme position of the goddess.

There is another concept of interest.[2] "The Devas are dead though they have drunk the nectar, but you are ever living bestowing grace though you have swallowed poison untouched by any". Here is a veiled reference to the fact that among all gods the Devi alone is capable of bestowing grace. In the above references it may be seen that all the exploits of Śiva, like the swallowing of poison, are ascribed to the Devi. So also the exploits of Vishnu as Krishna, like the destruction of the *Marudu* tree, and of Sakaṭāsura are ascribed to the Devi.

That the Devi combined in herself Śaivite and Vaishnavite traditions is often mentioned in this text. The Devi is said to be the sister of Vishnu.[3] She is said to wear both the *konṛai* and *Tulasi* garland[4] (*Tulasi* standing for the Vishṇu aspect).

The chapter on the demand for justice, *Vaḷakkurai-Kādai,* distinguishes Durgā from Kāli. Kannaki appears at the Royal Gate to demand justice for the murder of her husband. The gatekeeper informs the ruler of the arrival of Kannaki whom he describes as the lady with a terrific countenance. In this context, the gatekeeper says that she is neither Durga nor Kāli but more than that.[5]

The description of Durgā and Kāli here is worth mentioning. Durgā is the goddess of victory, holding in her hand the victorious spear and standing upon the nape of the buffalo from whose fresh wound unceasing blood flows. Kāli is younger than the six mothers (the youngest of the *Saptamātas*) and as Bhadra Kāli she witnessed the dance of Śiva. She tore open the heart of Dārukāsura. She is fond of the forest which is the residence of ghosts and goblins. It is necessary to discuss some aspects of Kāli as portrayed here. It is here for the first time that we come across a clear distinction between Durgā and Kāli. Durgā is the Devi who destroyed Mahishāsura. Kāli's manifestation is different in many aspects. In later literature she is always described as Kāḍukal (*Kāḍu kiḻāḷ i.e.* the goddess, of the forest). As the goddess who witnessed the dance of Śiva, she is Bhadra Kāli and that is how she is portrayed in sculpture. That she killed Dārukāsura is also mentioned in this text. "*Silappadikāram*" is influenced by Kerala traditions where the story of Dārukāsura is very popular. It is evidently the legend that arose from Śiva's enticing movement in Darukāvana and the subjugation of

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1. Swaminatha Iyer, *Ibid.*, P. 315.
2. *Ibid.*, P. 318.
3. *Ibid.*, P. 314.
4. *Ibid.*, P. 316.
5. *Ibid.*, P. 478 lines 34 to 40.

the sages. It is of interest to mention that the destruction of Darukasura by Kāli is not mentioned so often in other literature which shows its Keralaite impact.

Some customs as mentioned in this text are also worth recording. A lady who lost her husband broke her bangles in the temple of Koṟṟavai. When Kannaki lost her husband, she broke her bangles at the entrance to the temple of Koṟṟavai[1] (23-181). The efficacy of *Durgāmantra* in exposing frauds was also fully believed. When Kovalan was on his way to Madurai with Kannaki, a certain forest demi-goddess, falling in love with him, assumed the form of a servant of his beloved Mādavi and enticed him. Kovalan, angered at this recited the *Durgāmantra*, called *Pāykalaippāvai mantram* (11-197-198).[2] (Pāykalai Pāvai is Durgā). When this *mantra* was uttered, the demi-goddess could not hide her identity, and appeared before him pleading forgiveness.

It has been mentioned earlier, that Durgā was adored both as a terrific as also a benign deity. It was believed that, if proper offerings were made to the goddess, she will go in front of the bows of the Eiyinars, with the *Yāḷi* standard, to bestow victory on them when they go on a cattle lifting[3] expedition.

There were wandering ministrels singing the exploits of Goddess Durgā. They were called *Antari kolam pāḍum Pāṇar*[4] and the songs themselves were called *Pāykalaippāvai Pādarpāṇi.*

Not only the musicians but also the dancers were greatly fascinated by the various themes connected with the exploits of Durgā. Mādhavi performed the eleven dances in the *Indra viḷā*. Among the eleven dances, two were dances of Durgā, one as Bhairavi and the other as Durgā. That Bhairavi is addressed as *Nṛttesvari* in other texts is well-known, from works like the *Malatimādhava*. As mentioned earlier these eleven dances were performed by the dancing girl Mādhavi. Another instance of the dance, this time by a male dancer, named *Kūttachākkai*, is said to have been witnessed by the Chera king, Senguttuvan. The dancer performed the *Koṭṭicchedam* performed by Śiva, with Uma as part of himself. The description of this dance clearly indicates the Ardhanāri aspect with all the features of Devi fully represented.

The Pattini Cult :

That the *Silappadikāram* extols the cult of Pattini is well known. Though this is not connected directly with *Śakti* worship, it is necessarily the worship of the female principle and is, therefore, worthy of study in this context. A lady who gave up her life when her husband died, either by throwing herself in the funeral pyre, or by some other means, was considered a *Pattini*, the goddess of chastity. She was deified and worshipped.

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1. Swaminatha Iyer, *Ibid.*, P. 506.
2. *Ibid.*, P. 297.
3. *Ibid.*, P. 317.
4. *Ibid.*, P. 334.

Kannaki died on the 14th day after her husband's death, and she was worshipped by two sections of society, the people of the hilly region, where Kannaki gave up her life and secondly by the ruling monarch himself.

The worship by the hill tribes was no more than the place under the *Vengai* tree where Kannaki gave up her life. They immediately accepted her as the deity of their clan and offered worship to her. This worship consisted of blowing trumpets, beating small drums, ringing of bells, and offering flowers. This is the simplest form of worship that the hill tribes offered her. But they prayed that the worship would bring timely rain and fertility.

When the Chera King, Senguttuvan, decided to erect a temple to Kannaki, it was considered necessary that he should obtain the stone for carving the image of Kannaki from the Himalayas. Though suitable stones were available in his country, it was counselled that he should bring the stone from the holy Himalayas which alone would befit his greatness. The third canto of this epic is devoted entirely to the northern expedition of Senguttuvan, his bringing the stone and erection and consecration of the temple of Kannaki.

Though the entire episode as described is legendary and has very little of history, it nevertheless contains valuable information on the mode of erection and consecration of the temple to the goddess.

An auspicious day was selected for the expedition to bring the stone, and the king with his retinue and army started out for the purpose. After overcoming the encounters a suitable stone was selected and the image of Pattini was carved. The carved stone was brought to the banks of the Ganges and bathed in the holy river in confirmity with the *Sāstric* rules with the help of masters versed in ritual.[1] On this occasion the King honoured his soldiers with golden flowers, which was more than he would present even on his birthday. The expedition returned to the capital with the King leading the soldiers on an elephant to the accompaniment of music and dance.

In the company of Brahmanas, *Āchārya*, the astrologer and the *Śilpāchārya*, Senguttuvan got the temple of Pattini constructed in all its parts according to the prescribed rules, so that it might win the approval of the wise. Therein was installed the image of Pattini, carved by skilful sculptors. The image was duly decorated with choice ornaments of exquisite workmanship. At the entrance to the temple were stationed the guardian deities. Worship was offered with flowers. Having thus consecrated the deity, Senguttuvan instituted daily rites and festivals.

After the consecration, there were music and dances at the end of which the goddess appeared and blessed the King. The goddess Pattini consecrated by Senguttuvan is refered to as the daughter of the king.[2]

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[1] Swaminatha Iyer, 27-11 to 24. Also VRR, P. 305.

[2] *Ibid.*, 29-31.

A miracle happened when Senguttuvan was standing in front of the goddess. A certain lady Devantikai became god-possessed and asked the Brahmin Māḍalan to sprinkle water on three girls standing nearby, which would reveal their previous birth. When so done, it was found that they were the mothers of Kannaki and Kovalan in the previous birth. Then the Chera king completed the ceremonial rites; other kings like the northern rulers, Kongu King, the King of Malva, and Gajabahu of Ceylon, prayed reverentialy to the deity that she should grace their country also with her presence. The goddess granted their request. After praising the goddess and placing the lady, Devantikai in charge of worship of the temple, Senguttuvan retired to his vedic sacrificial hall.

In this royal consecration, the entire process from the selection of stone to the installation, and the institution of daily rites and festivals (*nityapūja* and *nityōtsavas*), is clearly after the *Āgamic* code of the higher castes. This is in distinct contrast to the simple deification by the hill tribes. Further two things stand out prominently in this chapter. Though Senguttuvan went on expedition for bringing the stone and constructed the temple and instituted worship, he was primarily a follower of vedic sacrifice, as he is shown returning to his vedic sacrificial hall, at the end. Secondly, the office of priesthood for the temple of Kannaki, was entrusted to a lady Devantikai, which suggests that it was not uncommon, to have lady priests for temples of goddesses. In this case, Devantikai was a Brāhmana lady is worth mentioning. It may be suggested that the consecration of Śakti images and institution of daily rites could not have differed very much from the above.

When new cults came into existence, especially with the royal support, they spread to other countries as well, and people were ready to accept such new faiths and assimilate them with their own.

MANIMEKALAI

The *Manimekalai*[1] is a well-known epic in Tamil, narrating the story of a lady Manimekalai, who became a Buddha *Bhikshuni* in the end. The main aim of the work is to extol the greatness of Buddhism, in preference to other schools of Indian thought. The date of this epic is far from settled and various views exist among scholars. We will not be wrong in holding that it belongs to a period earlier than the Pallava supremacy in Tamil Nadu for it carries no reference to this dynasty in its long narration.

It has interesting references to the *Śakti* cult as prevelant in Tamil land. Four forms of the goddess are prominently mentioned in this work and they are: (*a*) Champāpati, (*b*) Kāḍukāḷ, (*c*) Vindhyavāsini and (*d*) Chintādevi.

Champāpati :

The goddess Champāpati[2] occupies a prominent position in the epic. She is the presiding deity of the city of Kaveri-pumpaṭṭinam, which was originally called

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[1] *U. V. Swaminatha Iyer* (Ed.), *Maṇimekalai*, Madras, 1956.

[2] *Ibid.*, P. 1-2.

Champāpati. From the description of the deity it is evident that she is none other than Durgā, the *Adhidevata* of the city of Champā. She is said to be golden in colour like the rising sun, and wears matted locks, spread on all side. The goddess first appeared on the golden hill of Meru and came down South. She is also the presiding deity of the Jambūdvīpa. She is said to have stood below the *Jambu* tree and did penance to remove the sufferings of the world and to conquor the *Rākshasas*.

The above description of Champāpati, occurs at the very beginning of the work which shows the impact of the *Śakti* cult on this predominantly Buddhist work. The attributes of this deity are clearly traceable to the concept of Durga as reflected in late Vedic and Puranic literature. Here she is described as golden coloured. The Vedic passage calls her *Agnivarṇā* or *Hiraṇya Varṇā—tām agnivarṇām tapasā jvalantīm.*

That she had spread out matted locks of hair, shows her identity with Śiva. Her penance would recall the *tapas* performed by Parvati. That Devi's association with montains is well-known and *Manimekalai* describes her as emanating from the Meru mountain. The *Dẹvī Māhātmya* points out that the Goddess incarnated herself to destroy the *Rākshasas* and remove the sufferings of the world. From the above descriptions it is evident that the Champāpati, the presiding deity of the Champāpati is Durgā.

That Durgā appearing as the *Adhidevata* of a city or a *grāma*, is as old as 1st century B.C. A golden coin, issued by an unknown Indo-Seythian king, reads *Pushkalāvatī Devata*,[1] evidently the presiding deity of the city of Pushkalāvati. Dr J.N. Banerjee has rightly identified her with Durga. Similarly the description of *Madurāpati Devata* in *Silappadhikāram*, also points to the same fact that she is none other than Durga.

Champāpati, also called the most ancient, received the river Kāveri whom she described as celestial Gangā. Sage Agastya asked the river goddess to pay obeissance to Champāpati and Champāpati gave the name Kāviripūmpaṭṭinam to the city after the river goddess. From the above it is evident that Śakti as the goddess was considered more ancient than rivers, mountains, etc., which in philosophical term would mean that she is *Ādiśakti.*

A further, somewhat more elaborate description of the deity occurs in chapter six of the work. It relates to a description of a cemetry temple, which was also called *Chakravāḷakkoṭṭam*[2]. The cemetry was situated outside the city near a *upavana* It is said to have come into existence along with the city. It had an cnclosure running all around with four decorated entrances; each having some one of the entrances had a painting of a divinely chariot, while another had a mural depicting paddy fields, sugarcane fields, ponds and pleasant groves. The third had no decoration but had a silvery finish with shining lime plaster. The fourth entrance had a huge stucco figure probably of Bhairava with *pāśa* and *Śūla.*

Inside this cremation ground was situated a temple dedicated to Kāli, here called *Kāḍamar Selvi*, the deity of the forest. In front of the temple was an open yard and a *balipiṭha*. The tall trees in front of the temple carried heads of those who had sacrificed themselves willingly to propitiate the goddess. In the same cemetry there were *Kāpālikas* and *Suḍalai Nonbis*, who offered cooked food under the *Vanni* trees. There were also *Mahāvratins*, ematiated by their penance, making garlands of broken skulls under *Ilatti* trees.

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[1] J.N. Banerjee, *op. cit.*

[2] Swaminatha Iyer, *op. cit.*, Chapter 6.

The temple of Kāḍamar Selvi was inside the *Smaśāna* is an interesting feature. Kāli is often referred to in literature as *Mayāna Vasinī*. That people offered their head as offerings speaks of the *Sākta* cult. It is seen that such worshippers tied their head to the branches of trees and severed their heads. Such a practise is also alluded to in later works like the *Kallingattupparaṇi*. The head-offerings, a form of primitive cult was always associated with *Śakti* cult. Besides this, the presence of *Kāpālikas* and *Mahāvratins* in the vicinity is to be noted[1]. It is said that *śakti piṭhas* were always found near Śiva temples. (The description of the cemetry seems to be close to the description of cemetry in *Mālatimādhava* a sanskrit work by Bhavabhuti.)

There was a belief in those days that the goddess *Nagaradevatā*, will remove all sufferings and injustices. Gautami, a lady lost her only son. She carried the dead body to the cemetry and pleaded with the goddess Champāpati, to bring him back to life. The goddess called all the gods of the place and asked whether anyone among them could bring back to life, the dead boy. The gods said that it was not possible. Gautami realised that it was impossible to restore life once it was extinct. She gave up her life as well. In this context Gautami addresses Champāpati as the greatest of gods and protectress of river banks, open yards, trees, residences and temples.

துறையும் மன்றமும், தொல்வலி மரமும்
உறையுளும் கோட்டமும் காப்பாய்
(வரிகள் : 6-136-137)

Here the benign aspect of the deity is also alluded to.

The *Maṇimekalai* refers to a pavilion, in front of the temple Champāpati. Called the world forum,[2] it was an asylum to suferring human beings. Many ascetics were also there.

It is of interest to mention that this temple of Champāpati, and this *Ulaka aravī* play an important role in this epic. Many important episodes, often crucial to the development of the story, are seen enacted there. Maṇimekalai, herself a Buddhist, went and stayed there. She is seen often worshipping the goddess. When she got the *akshayapātra*, with which she could feed countless people, she went to the temple of Champāpati, offered worship to Her and then began feeding the poor in the *ambalam*.

It must be mentioned that the epic *Maṇimekalai* was essentially a Buddhist work, intended to propagate Buddhist religion. The heroine of the epic was herself a *Bhikshuni*, advocating *Bauddha dharma*. In such a work, we find the temple of Kāli

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1. Swaminatha Iyer, *op.cit.*, 6-84-86.
2. *Ibid.*, 17-86.

receiving a vital role and that even the *Buddha Bhikshuni*, often going to this temple to offer worship. It shows that the *Śakti* cult was so popular among the public, it was held in high esteem by all sects.

Meruchakra :

One of the interesting aspects of the *Śakti* cult, is the adoration of the deity in the form of a magical diagram, *chakra.* There seems to be a veild reference to the existence of Chakra in *Maṇimekalai.*

It has been mentioned earlier, that the goddess Champāpati summoned all the gods to see whether anyone could bring back to life, a dead. Since all the gods assembled in the place of Champāpati, a temple was erected to honour the goddess. The whole structure was made of stucco.

In the centre was shown the tall Meru mountain; encircling were seven small hills. In the next circle were seven deep seas, equal in depth, to the height of the mountains. Beyond these were shown the form of *dvipas* (the great islands) surrounded by 8000 small islands. In these were shown human beings, animals, plants, trees, etc. A careful study of this shows that it was a diagran *maṇḍala* representing a *meru chakra*, hence the name *Chakravāḷakōṭṭam.* The name *Chakravāḷa* has not so far been properly explained. To us it seems the term *Chakravāla* (*chakra+ālam i.e.* circle) is a deliberate choice to suggest the *Chakra maṇḍala* aspect. That this concept of Chakra seems to have taken full shape even at this period is interesting. The following epithets of Lalita in *Lalitā Sahasranāma* may be remembered here with advantage.

Sumēru giri madhyasthā i.e. dwelling on the middle of Mount Meru. *The Maṇimekalai* also speaks of middle peak of the Mount Meru,

"*naḍuvu ninṟa Meru Kunṟamum*"[1]

Maṇimekalai also states that this was in the centre of an ocean,

Sūl Kaḍal Valai iya Vāliyaṁ Kunṟam

Lalitā Sahasranāma says,

Sudhā Sāgara madhyasthā i.e. residing in the centre of the ocean of nectar. Hence the Chakravālakkoṭṭam of *Maṇimekalai* is *Chakra-rāja-nilayā* of the *Śākta* cult.

Vindhyavāsinī :

The goddess Kāli, is often refered to as Vindhyavāsinī in *Śākta* works. This concept was also well-known in the time of *Maṇimekalai.* Vindhyavāsinī is referred to by name in this work. The goddess Antari (*i.e.* Kāli) resided on top of the Vindhyā hill. Those who move through the air, will not dare to cross this mountain for the goddess would drag such persons through their shadow and swallow. She is also called *Vindāghaṭikai.* A certain character in the story called Kāyachanḍikā who accidentally crossed the mountain was swallowed by the goddess thus.[1] In this aspect she is described as a terrific goddess, destroyer of human beings, and as one dreaded by all men.

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[1] Swaminatha Iyer, *op.cit.*, 6-193.

Cintādēvi :

The *Maṇimekalai*, refers to a temple of Cintādēvi, in south Madurai. The temple is called *Kalai Niyamam*[2] and the deity, goddess of Meditation, *Cintā Viḷakku*—(the light of Cinta). She is again decribed as Vāk devi (*Nāmisai Pāvāc*) the goddess of Gods and men, and undying light and as one who wards of sufferings.[3]

This Cintādevi gifted an *Akshayapātra* (a devine bowl) to a certain Āputra, who fed the poor with the bowl. This bowl was later obtained by Maṇimekalai, which forms an important episode in the story. It is seen that this deity was worshipped by all sections of the society (*yāvarum ēttum i.e.* adored by all).[4] The temple seems to have been in a dark place and the people came to the temple during the darkness.

ஆரிருள் அஞ்சாது அம்பலமணைந்து[5]

Other Aspects :

Besides the above references to Champāpati, Vindhyāvāsinī and Cintādevi, a few other aspects are worthy of note. Kāli is said to feed devils (*pēys*) with the *Kapāla* in her hand.

காடமர் செல்வி கடிப்பசி அணைய
ஒடு கைக்கொண்டு நின்றூட்டுநள்[6]

Worshipping the goddess with mind, speech and body (*Manas*, *Vāk* and *Kāya*) is also alluded to. It also probably refers to prostrating three times at the feet of the dēvi.

முதியாள் கோட்டம் மும்மையிற் வணங்கி[7]

YĀPPARUNKALAVṚITTI

Yāpparunkalavṛitti,[8] is an important Tamil work on prosody. It gives well organised grammatical rules and cites a number of verses from early works as illustrations. The work is to be assigned to 9th century A.D. and as such the citations

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1. Swaminatha Iyer, *op.cit.*, 20-116-121.
2. *Ibid.*, 14-10.
3. *Ibid.*, 14-18-20.
4. *Ibid.*, 14-10.
5. *Ibid.*, 25-141.
6. *Ibid.*, 18-115-116.
7. *Ibid.*, 17-87-88.
8. M.V. Venugopala Pillai (Ed.), Yapparunkalam, Madras, 1960.

are earlier than that period. Among them a few verses occur extolling the greatness of Sakti.

In one of the verses,[1] occurs a graphic description of these goddess. She stands on the head of the haughty buffaloe. She wears both *Silambu* and *Kaḻal* and manifests herself on the golden hill. She rides on a stag and is victorious in the battle field. She has destroyed the *Asuras* in terrific battles. Kūli followed her in her war expeditions. She was playing with balls (*krīḍa kantugas*). In her arms she carried a bell, a parrot, spear (trident), sword, shield, bow, (*Koḍu*) horn and a musical instrument.

This lyrical hymn is interesting in a particular way, since, it mentions a horn (cornucopia) as one of the weapons in her arms. Such a representation is not to be seen in Tamil Nadu, though cornucopia occurs as an important emblem of Śakti in early representations of her in northern India.

Yāpparunkalam also refers to the eleven traditional dances[2] said to have been performed by the gods. Among the eleven, Durgā is said to have danced the pole-dance (*Marakkāl*), and the Saptamātas are said to have performed *Tuḍiāḍal*. *Silappadikāram* does not refer to the dance of Saptamātas but mentions the dance of Bhārati (Bhairavi), called *Pāṇḍaranga* on the charriot in the presense of Brahma. However, this work mentions that *Pāṇḍaranga* was danced by Śiva himself. In the Devaram hymns the *Pāṇḍaranga* is said to have been performed by Śiva.

This *Pāṇḍaranga* is probably identical with *'ter mun Kuṟavai'*[3] in which, the King, vanquishing his enemy, dances with the victorious joy, on the war-chariot, in the battle field. It is, therefore, quite fitting that Śiva, dances *Pāṇḍaranga* at the battle field when he conquered the Tripurāsura. In the case of Devi we do not know whether she danced in the charriot when she destroyed the *Rākshasas* like Mahishāsura, Sumbha and Nisumbha.

KALLĀḌAM

Kallāḍam[4] is an interesting Tamil work, dealing with 100 different love lorn conditions but with a special emphasis on the exploits of Śiva of Madurai. In fact, the main aim of the poem is to extol the greatness of Lord Śiva of Madurai, with the poetic convention of love lorn themes as a back drop. The author of the poems, called Kallāḍar, is assigned to the later half of the 11th century by scholars.[5]

In many of the verses, the dance of Śiva at Madurai is portrayed in vivid pictures. In most of these instances, the Devi is said to witness the dance. In describing the Devi, she is often mentioned as the daughter of Himavān.[6]

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1. M.V. Venugopala Pillai (Ed.), Yapparunkalam, Madras, 1960, P. 247, 248.
2. *Ibid.*, P. 443, 444.
3. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer (Ed.), *Purapporuḷ Vnebāmālai*, Madras, 1963, Verse 143, P. 67-68.
4. *Kallāḍam*, Murray S. Rajam edition, Madras, 1967.
5. M. Arunachalam, History of Tamil literature—11th Century; Kalladam, 1971, P. 32-34.
6. *Ibid.*, P. 11-17, 22-27.

One of the poem, refers to the competition between Śiva and Kāli. (The entire dance of Kāli with various *mudras*, flexions of the body, and the rhythmic changes, are described in highly technical terms). At the end, Kāli could not compete, but stood by the side, vanquished and ashamed. *Ḍākini* an attendent is said to have stood on her right.[1]

Many verses describe her as the Mother of the Universe. A concept that received greater emphasis. In one verse she is described as the virgin, who gave birth to this great *aṇḍa*.

அண்டப் பெரும் திரள் அடைவு ஈன்றளித்த கள்வி
(வரிகள் : 6-36; 28-16. 17)

Umā who gave birth to the *loka*

உலகம் ஈன்றளித்த உமை
(வரிகள் : 25. 24)

எண்ணில் பெருத அண்டப் பெருந்திரள்
அடைவு ஈன்றளித்த பிறை நுதற் கன்னி
(வரிகள் : 28-16. 17)

உலகு பெற எடுத்த ஒரு தனிச் செல்வி
(வரிகள் : 60-29)

The marriage of Pārvati with Śiva also finds mention in a number of verses.

பனிக்கதிர் குலவன் பயந்த பாவையைத்
திருப்பெரு வதுவை பொருந்திய அந்நாள்
(வரிகள் : 11-17. 18)

Here the reference is to Umā as Haimavatī marrying Śiva. In other instances the local legend of Pārvati being born as a Pāndya princess with three breasts and Śiva marrying her is also refered to (13-12-13; 31-8-20). A graphic description of the marriage rites is seen in verse 31.

That the Devi forms the left half of Śiva is also alluded to (85-33).

An interesting reference relates to the Dēvi holding the bow when Śiva distroyed the Tripurās.

சென்னிமலை ஈன்ற கன்னி விற் பிடிப்ப
(வரிகள் : 26-24)

Verse 82-1-11 describes the cremation ground, the offer of head sacrifice, carrying lamps in hands, the goblins and *Ḍākinis* serving the Devi. The Devi who delights in such ghastly scenes, is said to be the very embodiment of kindness. She is said to wear the crescent moon and poison. She is also described as the mother of Muruga. Another verse (91) gives a detailed description of the desert, and the iconographic description of Durga. Of interest is the reference to *Ḍākinis* as her attendent. The Devi is said to wear green *Tulasi* garland, a green parrot on her front arm, silken garment on her waist and *Triśūla* in her hand. (She is said to have destroyed the *Asuras*). She bore three eyes, eight arms and protruding teeth like the crescent moon. The above description shows that the complete picturisation of Kāli has become very popular by that time.

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[1] M. Arunachalam, History of Tamil Literature—11 Century; Kalladam, 1971, P. 63-1 to 25.

The work also has another interesting reference which relates to a temple of Durgā, situated in the north of the city of Madurai. The description of Durgā, as one wearing anklets, necklaces, *tulasi* garland, and performing the pole-dance (மரக்கால் ஆட்டம்) are referred to. It must be mentioned, that in the lay out of villages and cities, *vāstu* texts prescribe the northern direction, for the temple of Durgā. Medieval epigraphs describe her as the deity of northern direction—*Vadavāyilchelvi*. The present work shows there was a Durga temple in the north of the city of Madurai.

KALINGATTUPPARAṆI

The 11th and 12th centuries A.D., particularly the latter may be considered the best period in the history of classical Tamil literature. Incidentaly the period also witnessed the beginning of great works, directly based on *Śākta Cult*. Among them the *Kalingattupparaṇi*[1] by Jayamkoṇḍār is not only the first but also the best work extolling the greatness of Kāli.

Paraṇi Literature :

It would be useful to have a background to this type of literature. *Paraṇi* is considered the Sanskrit equivalant of *Bharaṇi*, a star. *Bharaṇi* is the star of Kāli and also that of Yama, the god of death. A commentary on *Tolkāppiyam* states that it was a tradition to offer *kūḻ*, *i.e.* boiled soup and *Tunangai* dance to Kāli, on the *Bharaṇi* day. The *Kalingattupparaṇi* avers that this tradition was in Mahābhārata war. As Kāli is the giver of victory in battles, special offering made to her at the victorious battle field came to be called *Paraṇi*. So the literature having as its main theme a singnal victory over an enemy and described in a dramatic setting with Kāli as the main deity, came to be called *Paraṇi*.

Kaḷavēḷvi, a fore-runner of Paraṇi :

No direct reference is met with, for *Paraṇi*, in Sangam literature. But three types of poetic compositions called *Kaḷavaḷi*, *Pin-ter-Kuravai* and *vāḷ mangalam*, are the fore-runners of *Paraṇi* literature as a full blown *kāvya* by 11th century A.D. *Kaḷavaḷi* or *Kaḷavēḷvi* in *Sangam* period refers to the sacrifice offered by the victorious king at the battle-field. The sacrifice consisted of blood, flesh, flour, chopped off limbs of enemies, etc. These were used for preparing a salad, to be offered as a sacrifice in honour of the victory. That goblins were present in this sacrifice is referred to by the *Sangam* works. But the deity to whom the offering was made is not mentioned by name in any of the *Sangam* works. The later commentators like Nachchinarkiniyār, mention that this offering was intended for Koṟṟavai, *i.e.*, Durgā or Kāli. In all probability it was the case. In which case we have to consider that *Kaḷa-*

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[1] *Kalingattupparaṇi*.

vaḷi or *Mara-kala-vēḷvi*, of the sangam age as the forerunner of *Paraṇi* literature of later periods. However, none of the *Sangam* works, has given such an emphasis on Kāli cult as *Kalingattupparaṇī* or other *Paraṇis.*

The early Paraṇis :

The Tolkāppiyam does not refer to the type of literature called *Paraṇi.* But a work called *Panniru Pāṭṭiyal,* assigned to the 10th century A.D. gives the grammer of *Paraṇi* literature. Though we have no surviving *Paraṇi* work which could be dated earlier than the *Kalingattuparaṇi,* it is possible that some *Paraṇi* works existed before. M. Arunachalam thinks[1] that the *sūtras* dealing with *Paraṇi* literature might have been later interpolations. His doubt is justified, for the earliest reference to a *Paraṇi* work occurs in 11th century A.D. Oṭṭakkuttar, another great *Paraṇi* composer refers to two early *Paraṇis, Koppattu Paraṇi* and *Kūḍal-Sangama-Paraṇi,* the former, signifying the victory of Rājēndra Chola II, at Koppam and the latter, the conquest Kūḍal Sangama by Vīrarājēndra Chola I. These two Chola rulers were predecessors of Ḳulottunga I. These two *Paraṇis* have not survived, but Jayangoṇḍār, the author of *Kalingattupparaṇi* could himself have been the author of these works or a contemporary of their author.

The earliest *Paraṇi* to have survived so far is *Kalingattupparaṇi* which unmistakably shows the *Sākta* cult in its full form.

The format :

The *Paraṇi* is usually set in the following format. After imprecatory verses, the young women of the city are called to wake up, and open the door of their houses and are invited to join in singing the glory of the victor. Generally this part is full of references to amourous sports of the ladies, with their victorious husbands. The next chapter deals with the greatness of forest, the abode of Kāli, followed by the description of Kāli and her attendent goblins. Then the hero, his ancestry, the cause of the war and a detailed description of the war follow. At the end, when victory was achieved, the goblins prepare a feast and singing the praises of the victor make an offering to goddess Kāli and delight in the feast. The entire literature is thus based on *Sākta* cult and is full of references to *Sākta* customs, and rituals in which sense they are a good source of information for the present study.

As mentioned earlier the *Paraṇi* literature seems to have become popular from the 11th century A.D. when two *Paraṇis* are said to have been composed, but they have not survived. Besides these two there was a *Paraṇi* written by Oṭṭakkūttan, on Vikramachola's conquest of Kalinga, which has also not survived. The *Kalingattuparaṇi* of Jayamkoṇḍār, and three lost *Paraṇis* mentioned above celebrated the victories of the Chola rulers. Oṭṭakkuttan has sung another *Paraṇi* on a puranic theme, namely the destruction of Daksha's *Yagña* by Virabhadra. A few *Paraṇis* based on Puranic legends like *Hiranyavadha,* etc., and others based on philosophic concepts, such as *Agñā-Vadha* (the destruction of ignorance) have survived. In all these works the role of Kāli, her attendant goblins and the offer of victory-sacrifice, form the main literary format.

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[1] M. Arunachalam, History of Tamil literature—12th century, Pt. 1, Madras, P. 379.

Kalingattupparaṇi :

Kalingattupparaṇi on Kulottunga, begins with an invocation to the Kalyanasundara form of Śiva. The verse itself is significant and truely reflects the spirit of the *Sākta* beliefs reflected throughout the poem.

Union of Siva and Sakti :

"Adoration to Lord Śiva, who, in order to establish homely life in the world, married Pārvati, the daughter of Himavān, with Vishnu giving Pārvati, in marriage by pouring water and Brahman offering *homas*".[1] The invocatory verse begins with the union of Śakti with Śiva, an important concept of the *Śākta* religion. The term *Punarnta* used in this verse to denote marriage is also significant. The word *Puṇartal* stands for marriage as well as sexual union. Though its primary meaning in the context is marriage the poet has employed this word deliberately to suggest the sense of sexual union, *i.e. maithuna*, which is one of the *Pancha makāras* of the *Śākta* cult.

After the invocation of the marriage of Śakti with Śiva, other deities like Vishnu, Brahma, Surya, Ganesa and Subramanya are invoked in order. This is followed by salutation to Sarasvati[2] who is said to reside in the tongue of Kulottunga. Again we come to the goddess Uma,[3] who is described as a virgin. She bore red coloured Śiva in her right half, and prevented cupids arrows aimed at Śiva, falling on her feet. This verse seems to indicate that though she is inseparably united with Śiva, is adored as a virgin by the *Śāktas*.

Saptamātas :

The next verse is dedicated to *Saptamātās*,[4] the seven Mothers whose vehicles are also praised. The following are the mounts thus described: swan for Brahma, bull for Māhesvari, peacock for Kaumāri, elephant for Indrāni, buffaloe for Vārāhi and goblin for Chamuṇḍa. The adoration of Saptamāta is of interest for they are the secondary deities, in the temple of Kāli. Perhaps this is the earliest work which includes separate invocatory verse for the saptamātas.

The next Chapter, as mentioned already, relates to the amorous conditions of young maidens of the city. The sexual unions of these maidens are portrayed in such a vivid manner that many an orthodox scholars, feel shy of this chapter.

The desert :

The third chapter describes the forest, the abode of Kāli, titled *Kāḍu pāḍivatu i.e.*, the praise of forest. In Tamil literature and inscriptions, Kāli is described as

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1. *Kalingattuparaṇi*, v. 1.
2. *Ibid.*, v. 13.
3. *Ibid.*, v. 15.
4. *Ibid.*, v. 17.

the deity of the forest. *Kāḍu Kiḻāḷ*, *Kāḍu Kaḷ*, *Vāna Nāḍi*, etc. The *Tolkāppiyam*, divides the earth into four regions as hills, forest and coastal regions, and plains and each region has a deity of its own. Murugan is the Lord of hilly region, Vishnu of the forest, Indra of the plains, and Varuna of the coastal regions. In this scheme Kāli or Durgā is not conceived as the deity of the forest. In somewhat later period, a fifth, namely the desert region is also recognised. The desert region is said to be formed by one or the other region becoming a waste land. Koṟṟavai is considered the presiding deity of the desert region.

In this text, though the chapter heading reads *Kāḍu Pāḍiyatu*, forest land, it in fact relates to desert in all its terrific nature. The description of this desert with all its horrors is indeed a poetic device, to enhance the terrific aspect of the Goddess, and the destructive nature of the war that is to be described. The poetic description of the desert land is excellent. The trees are said to stand like ghosts, whithered and charred by the heat of the desert.

A unique temple :

The next chapter deals with the temple of the Goddess giving an insight into the mode of construction of a Kāli temple. The poet says though the desert land itself was the ancient temple of the goddess, dedicated by the very Creator, Brahma, we will describe a new type of temple erected for her. The poet's preface to the new temple is indeed apt; for the Kāli temple as described here is not only unique but also a strange one, being constructed of severed heads, bones, flesh, blood, etc., of the fallen soldiers, horses and elephants of the enemy. The work describes the process of construction from the *garbhavinyāsa* to the consecration.

The construction began with the impregnation ceremony of the building with the precious gems, an important ceremony in building structures that is done with the first brick-laying rite called *ādyēshṭakā vidhāna*. According to some texts, four bricks, each representing a veda, are laid and in the cavity so formed, gold and precious gems are put invoking the *vāstu dēvata*. Then the whole is sealed by the fifth brick. This called the *garbhavinyāsa*, which is a must not only for a Kāli temple but for all structures. A stone used in the *garbha* rite, bearing an inscription in the reign of Kulottunga I, said to have been gifted by his sister, Kundavai, was noticed in Chidambaram. It is called *Karu* (*garbha*) in the inscription. Befitting the general trend of this poem, Jayamkondar says the gems so laid were the *māngalyas* of the wives of the opponent kings killed in the battle.

The walls of this peculiar temple, were erected with heads as bricks, flesh as mortar and blood as water. The pillars and the lintels were the wooden beams used in the fortifications of Kulottunga's enemies. Evidently enemy fortresses were destroyed and the wood used in this temple as pillars and lintels. The triangular wooden frame-work called *tula*, for the roof and cross-reapers were made of the tusks of elephants killed in battle. The *nāsikas*, another architectural element, were made of *yālis*, elephants, pig and lion standards of the opponents, captured in the battle field. The roof covering was made of elephant hangings captured in the battle of Tungabhadra.

This temple of Kāli was enclosed by an enclosure wall and an entrance *gopura*, constructed with bones. This *gopura* was preceeded by a *makaratoraṇa* of iron erected by goblins. On the top of the enclosure walls, the severed heads of peacocks, the heads of men offered as sacrifice, the heads of young babies also severed in sacrifice and blood-oozing flesh as standards, were placed as beautifying elements. The *makaratoraṇa* captured from the Pāndyan capital, and the severed ears of war elephants were planted as swings.

The main shrine, a gopuram in front with a enclosure, a *makaratoraṇa* and a swing, were the constituents of this Kāli temple. These elements of the Kāli temples have survived even to this day and in many parts of Tamil Nadu these could be seen, except for this difference that they are made of regular building materials unlike this fantastic temple of poetic creation.

The description of the main temple brings to light another fact. It was a thatched building, a *Kuṭi*, like the Draupadi Ratha at Mamallapuram. We must remember that in the 12th century A.D., monumental temples built of stone were the most popular, but the temple of Kāli retained the form of a thatched building. Evidently independent temples, dedicated to Kāli, still retained the traditional form. We have mentioned that a thatched hut is described as the temple of Devi, in *Silappadikāram*.

Head-offerings :

Certain rituals conncected with Kāli worship are mentioned in this chapter. Three types of head offerings are mentioned in one of the verses viz. the heads of peacocks the heads of heroic men and heads of young babies. The peacock offering, *Mayūra bali* seems to have been popular. The head offerings by warriors are mentioned from *Sangam* period onwards, but the offering of young babies as bali to the goddess is mentioned for the first time in this work. That this gruesome offering to Kāli has become an accepted mode by the 12th century A.D. is evidenced from this verse. That this seems to have continued atleast upto 17th century is known from literature of that period. Another verse[1] says that like the roaring sound of ocean waves, the shouts of heroes offering their heads in return for the bestowal of boons were echoeing all over the area.

In one of the finest verses, the process of offering a head, is portrayed. The sacrificer cut his head at the bottom of the neck and placed it on the hands of Kāli. The head thus presented sang the greatness of Kāli while the remaining trunk stood saluting the Goddess.[2] Another form of head offering is also mentioned. The severed head is said to be placed on the *bali pīṭha* before the deity. An *Āndalai* bird (a kind of vulture) mistaking the head to be a bird of its own species, approached it and was chased away by the trembling head. As the head was severed, the remaining trunk was quivering.

1. *Kalingattuparaṇi*, v. 109.
2. *Ibid.*, v. 111.

Buffaloe offering is also referred to in this work. To the accompaniment of beating drums and shouts buffaloes were sacrificed and their blood offered.

The Kāli temple used to be swept, sprinkled with water and spread with flowers daily. In this work the poet says 'the horse' was used as *alaku,* the fresh blood as water and flesh offered as flowers. The fires consuming the corpses, resembled lamps.

There seemed to have been *homas* as well in Kāli temples. In this fantastic temple, the fire sticks were bones and the blood was used as ghee for the *homa*[1].

Sādhakas :

Sādhakas used to frequent this temple dancing to the beats of *ḍamarukas.* Evidently they were carrying the *ḍamarukas* (followers of Bhairava cult are said to adopt this practise). *Yoginis* used to come to this temple carrying swords in their right arms and heads in their left arms. In fact the Kāli temple was full of blood, flesh, burning corpses, vultures, jackals and goblins.

The description of the Kāli temple as given above not only presents a ghastly scene but also gives a peep into the terrific nature of practises, which were accepted by the then existing society.

The Goddess :

Chapter five is equally interesting for it directly portrays the goddess here called Moṭi. The description of the Devi begins with her feet, evidently following the mode of description of gods, known as *Pādādi kēsānta varṇana i.e.* foot to head description. The serpent Vāsuki, which was used as a rope around the Meru mountain for churning the milky ocean and the other serpent Ādisesha, which supports the entire Universe on its hood, coil around the feet of the Devi as anklets. The heavenly stars were embedded as gems on these anklets. Her face resembled the moon and the *tilaka,* the sun. Hers was a dancing form. Her breasts were as if vessels filled with ambrosia, and marked white with *vibhuti* by Śiva, so that he could enjoy it in seclusion in the forest. She wears the elephants hide presented to her by Śiva. Over this hide were tied as ropes, the intestines of the elephant, destroyed by Śiva and a serpant. Śiva gave this elephant's hide as a present to her, when he was pleased with his sexual union. These two verses again show the impact of the *panchamakāras* of the *Śākta* cult particularly the *maithuna,* in which the Goddess and Śiva are said to have engaged.

The Devi is the mother of Brahma, Vishnu, Ganēsa and Subrahmanya. Her *uttarīya* (upper garment) consists of a serpent, emetting fire, covering the breasts of the Devi which enamoured Śiva. Her hands are red as she drinks the blood of sacrificed heads, and becomes black as they are washed with the rut of the elephants.

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[1] *Kalingattuparaṇi,* v. 110.

When *ālakāla* poison appeared, the mountains began to melt; the ocean dried, smoke emanated and the living beings all around began to be charred and the *Devas* shivered. Śiva swallowed the poison. Under such a condition the Devi's lips gave him *amuda.* A mere glance of the goddess is capable of fanning the love-longings of Śiva but her sweet words, bewitching smile and rose lips would immediately quench his thirst.

The *Kulagiris* are worn by her as ear ornament. The same are also worn as garlands. She plays with the mountains as balls, *Kaḻanju* and *ammānai.*

If she desires there is nothing that is not achieved by her. The Devi's greatness is beyond description as she is the very embodiment of the meaning of *praṇava.*

The above description of the Devi points out many important aspects of the *Devi* cult. She is considered the mother of all gods like Brahma, Vishnu, Ganesa and Muruga. She is all powerful. Śiva is always fond of uniting with her. She is a terrific goddess as a blood sucker and simultaneously benign bestowing all boons.

Pancha-prēta-āsana-āsina

Chapter six deals with goblins who are hunger-striken and pray for food, but chapter seven gives some additional information on Kāli cult. Kāli is said to be seated on five *prētas* (*panchaprēta*) and has a goblin as a pillow. Her bed consists of the white part of the flesh, spread over the cot, having lamp-like legs. This bed of her is called *Pancha chayana.* She is carrying in her arms the weapons *piṇḍi* and *pāla.* As she was thus seated an old goblin came and saluted her. Once this old goblin committed a mistake and fearing the wrath of Kāli, ran away and hid itself in the Himalayas. Rudra Yogini, who was herself a servant of Kāli, taught this old goblin, *Indrajāla* (hypnotism and mesmerism) which it performed before the Goddess.

That Kāli was seated on *Panchaprēta* and that she had a Rudra yogini as her servant are the points that interest us. In *Śākta* cult, Kāli is called *Pancha pretāsanāsina* which shows the full impact of *Sākta* tradition.

The succeeding chapters of *Kalingattupparaṇi* deal with the geneology, birth and the conquests of Kulottunga and the last chapter has for its theme the sacrificial offering to Kāli at the battle field when Kulottunga gained the decisive victory at Kalinga. Kāli is here praised as *Piṇam tarum Nāchchi i.e.*, giver of corpses.

TAKKAYAGAPPARANI

The work *Takkayāgapparaṇi*[1] (*Dakshayāgapparaṇi*) by Oṭṭakkūttar is by far the best literary work of the Chola period (12th cent. A.D.) which throws valuable light on *Sākta* customs and beliefs. Since the author was a court poet under three successive Chola rulers, we are sure of its date, and will be in a position to asses the impact of *Śākta* cult as evolved upto the period.

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[1] U.V. Swaminatha Iyer (Ed.), Takkayagapparani, Madras, 1945.

Oṭṭakkūttan, a gifted poet and prolific writer adorned the court of Vikrama Chola, Kulottunga II and Rājarāja II. He has composed a type of poetry called *ulā* on all the three patrons and these works are now called *Mūvar ulā* (*i.e.*, *Ulā* on three). He has composed two *Paraṇis*, one on Vikramachola's conquest of Kalinga and the other on the destruction of *Daksha Yagña*. The former however has not survived while the later is undoubtedly the best among the poet's creations. Besides the *Ulās* and *Paraṇis*, Oṭṭakkūttan has sung many other poems like *Kulottungan Pillai Tamiḻ* (on Kulottunga II), *Gāngeyan Nālāyirakkovai* (four thousand amourous poems on a patron, Gāngeya), *Arumpai Toḷḷāyiram* (*Arumpai*, nine hundred) and *Īṭṭi Eḻupadu* (spear seventy), etc.

Oṭṭakkūttan was such an accomplished poet that he was called *Kaviccakravarti* (Emperor among poets). *Kavi Rākshasa*, and *Kāḷakkavi*. *Kāḷam* means piper. A special previllage seems to have been confered on him by the king in recognition of his poetic genius, that when he went out, pipes were blown announcing his visit; hence the name *Kāḷakkavi*. His mastery of various *sāstras* earned him the title *Sarvajña Kavi*. It is said that when he was composing the *Ulā* on Rājrāja Chola II, the King presented him one golden coconut for each verse.

Oṭṭakūttan was a great devotee of the Goddess Saraswati, which he mentions in one of his verses. But it is in describing the *Śakti* cult that he excels. In many verses he makes pointed references to *yāmaḷa tantras* and other works connected with the *Sākta* religion.

The *Takkayāgaparaṇi*, has an excellant commentary, by an anonymous author. According to tradition, the commentator was a desciple of Oṭṭakkūttan himself. In all probability he was. In many places he refers to historic personages, mentioned in epigraphs, otherwise unknown. His diction and vocabulary reflect the Chola period. In his commentary he at times refers to variant readings and comments on them. Probably the variations were made by the poet himself. At any rate he is not far removed from Oṭṭakkūttan, the author of the *Paraṇi*. The Commentator gives such an excellant exposition of the verses and their meanings, it is impossible to deal with this work without the commentary. For the purpose of our study, both the text and its commentary are taken together, indicating at appropriate places, whether the views are in the text or commentary.

The *Takkayāgapparaṇi*, set in the conventional pattern, deals with the appearance of Vīrabhadra at the command of Śiva, and punishing the gods who participated in the Daksha's, sacrifice and the gift of a goat's head to Daksha. As mentioned in *Kalingattuparaṇi* the work includes the description of Kāli, her forest, her temple, the attendent goblins and her worshippers. At the end, when Vīrabhadra defeated all the gods and destroyed the *Yagña*, the goblins offered *Kaḷavēḷvi* to Kāli, who delighted in the feast. The narration of the story need not detain us here. We will confine ourselves to the elements of *Sākta* cult alone in this study.

Identification with Vishnu :

Among various aspects of the Dēvi, described in this text one of the most striking feature is the complete identification of the Dēvi with the attributes of Vishṇu.[1] She is called *Māyoḷ* which is the femenine form of *Māyan i.e.*, Vishṇu. According to popular purānas, Vishṇu took the form of Mohini, distributed nectar to *Devas* and *Asuras* and in the process deceiving the *Asuras*, gave it to the *Devas*. In this text the goddess is said to have assumed the form of Mohini to distribute *Amṛtapāna* to the Gods and put an end to the life of *Asuras*[2]. The Dēvi, like Trivikrama Vishṇu is said to have measured the Universe with her lotus feet. These are said to have reached the *Mokshaloka*, piercing on the way the *Ākāsa*, the *elāchakra* (Sūrya), Mahāmēru, the clouds and the cyclonic storms.

She swallowed the fourteen universes, as *amṛita* through her rose lipped mouth and created them again, through the red lotus issuing from the naval of her beautiful abdomen. The Dēvi moves on her mount which is Garuḍa. Here the allusion is to Vishṇu as Krishna swallowing the entire universe through his mouth and creating the universe through Brahma who issued forth from his naval. That she had Garuḍa as her vehicle also suggests her Vishṇu aspect.

The Dēvi slept on the coiled serpent on the milky ocean[3]. She was wearing *Kausika* silk and garment. (Śiva wears skin while it is Vishṇu who wears silk). The Goddess has the serpent king Ādisesha as her seat. This thousand hooded cobra had thousand precious gems, and the hoods and gems resembled thousand milky oceans and thousand Ādityas. (It alludes to the thousand hooded Ādisesha). Its eyes emanated deadly poison, like the *vāḍava* fire residing in ocean. Its teeth were bent like the crescent moon, with full of poison. This snake was greater than Meru.

The Dēvi carried the five weapons, the *daṇḍa*, *khaḍga*, bow, conch and discus associated with Vishṇu. Her body was green in colour like emerald. (Vishṇu's colour is *maragata*). She is said to be seated thus on her seat *Anantasayana*.'

The above attributes of the Dēvi clearly indicate that she was Vishṇu as such, described by the commentator as *Vishṇu Māyā*. The probable reason for the identification of Dēvi with Vishṇu, was that she was always considered the sister of Vishnu. The second reason probably was that Vishnu formed the left half of Śiva in his Harihara aspect. Dēvi also formed the left half of Śiva and as such the two, namely Vishṇu and Pārvati forming the left half of Śiva were considered identical. Such absolute identity is noticed for the first time in this Tamil work.

Śrīdevi and Sarasvatī were gifted to Umāparameśwari as *strīdana* by their respective husbands Vishnu and Brahma, so that they may serve the goddess[4]. They are said to have placed their lotuses at the feet of the goddess. The commentator gives an

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1. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer (Ed.), *op. cit.*, v. 104.
2. *Ibid.*, v. 107.
3. *Ibid.*, v. 111.
4. *Ibid.*, v. 110-7.

interesting explanation. Besides Śridēvi Vishṇu had Bhūdevi as his consort. Likewise Brahma had Savitri in addition to Sarasvati as his consort. Śridēvi and Bhūdevi worshipped Parameśwari (who is the giver of all *soubhāgyas*—*Soubhāgya Kartṛi*) with their red and white roses respectively, in order that they may be the favourites of their husbands in preference to others. The Parameśwari granted their prayers.

Moṭi or Durgā parameśwari forms the left half of Śiva. The seven oceans, the seven crevices, the seven mountains and the Chakravāḷa mountain reside in her part.[1] She mounts on the sharp-horned deer.[2] She made the heart of her husband melt in love for her *payodhara*. She also rides on a sturdy lion.[3]

The Dēvi is wearing a serpant as pendant with precious gems, and a fine necklace of pearls. *Makara kuṇḍalas* adorn her ears while *Vāhuvalaya*, bracelets with *Yāli* face, decorate her shoulders. One half of her is that of her Lord Śiva, whose intense love she commands. While she was lying on the serpant, Śiva united with her.[4] The Dēvi carries Śūla in her hand.[5] A parrot is to be seen on one of her arms[6] and a crescent moon on her *jaṭas*. She is fond of music.[7]

The Dēvi's feet are adorned with *nūpuras*; the *Veda mantra-sākas* also adorn the feet of the Dēvi[8].

When the Dēvi takes bath in *mānasa-tīrtha* of the Himalayas, Lakshmi caresses her feet and *Bhūdevi* touches her body (obviously help her in bathing). Sarasvati will be seated in front of the Goddess listening to her commands.[9] Dēvi's foremost quality is her *pativratā-dharma*. By her effulgent *jyoti*, she is Omniecient.

The Temple:

It is impossible to describe the temple of the goddess as it is far beyond descriptions. The seven nether worlds, also called the *sapta pātālas*, are the lower tiers of her temple and the seven heavenly worlds form the upper tiers. The two mountains *udayagiri* and *astagiri*, stand at the entrance. The seven oceans act as the godown of her temple. The *Chakravāḷagiri* acts as the enclosure while the trident in her hand stands as the *raksha* of the whole temple. Mahodara, Guṇḍodhara, and Vyāghra mukha, and other *Karanagananāthas* stood as gate keepers. After they permit, Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Iśvara and Sadāsiva, who are the deities of the elements enter the temple. The *balipīṭhas* of the goddess, who is Viśveśvari, and Vedanāyaki, are the Mahāmēru. At the entrance of the temple there is the Padmanidhi.[10] Swans and

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1. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer (Ed.), *op. cit.*, v. 48.
2. *Ibid.*, v. 75.
3. *Ibid.*, v. 74.
4. *Ibid.*, v. 111.
5. *Ibid.*, v. 137.
6. *Ibid.*, v. 608.
7. *Ibid.*, v. 114.
8. *Ibid.*, v. 119.
9. *Ibid.*, v. 221.
10. *Ibid.*, v. 73.

peacocks dance in the temple of the goddess[1] while Indra and others play musical instruments.[2] Sūrya and Chandra are the perpetual lamps burning in her temple.[3]

Here we may make a diagression on the temple of the goddess as portrayed in the *Kalingattupparaṇi* and the *Takkayāgapparaṇi*. In *Kalingattupparaṇi*, we saw a temple —a fantastic temple indeed—said to have been erected with flesh, bones, blood etc. There the entire description was based on gruesome battle that formed the subject matter. But here the purpose was a divinely theme and all the descriptions are soul elevating divine concepts which incidently shows the Supreme nature of the Goddess as the very embodiment of the Divine nature. In that sense *Takkayāgapparaṇi* is certainly an improvement over its predecessor. While the *Kalingattupparaṇi* states that the temple was in the form of a hut, the shape of the temple is not indicated in this work.

The present text deals with a *Vaṭa Vṛiksa*, a banyan tree as the abode of the Dēvi. This tree comes in for special and detail treatment in this text. The description is again more poetical and philosophical than real. It is said to have supported the entire *aṇḍagolas* (mundane egg), when the ocean dried at the deluge. 'Even if all the twelve suns simultaneously shine, causing all the oceans to dry by their heat, their rays, can not penetrate through the leaves to the ground below which was ever cool. If one Brahma dies one leaf will fall from it. If that leaf falls in the ocean, the entire ocean will be dried up. If the fire of deluge arises, that itself will be charred and allowed to fall by the cool shades of the branches. When the final cyclonic storm, which is capable of uprooting not only the universe but also the various *Kulagiris* by its velocity, blows even a single leaf of the tree of the Goddess will not be moved by it. When there comes the final rain to destroy the world, this tree will protect it.

When Vishnu swallowed the fourteen worlds, he wanted to recline and found the milky ocean insufficient. He came and slept in one of the leaves of this tree. Śiva saṭ under its shades and taught the sixty-four *kalas* to his followers. When the entire world was being destroyed by Vạruna and Vāta at *Sarva samhāra lokayugānta* (the very end of the world), this tree would give protection. Mahādeva will sleep beneath its shades spreading elephant skin as bed and likewise Vishnu will safely recline on his serpent (Ananta). The peacock of Subrahmanya, and the Garuḍa of Vishṇu, are from this tree. The (*ashtamahānāgas*), the eight directional elephants (*ashṭadikgajas*) are tied to the shoots of the tree.

In order to emphasise the supreme nature of the Goddess, the gods of all other faiths, like Vishnu, Śiva, Subramanya, etc., are shown either taking protection under her tree or derive their mounts, weapons etc., from it, a poetic and at the sametime ingenius method of glorifying the goddess.

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[1] U.V. Swaminatha Iyer (Ed.), *op. cit.*, v. 111.
[2] *Ibid.*, v. 112.
[3] *Ibid.*, v. 137.

The temple of the Dēvi is adored by *Bhūta* and *paisāca ganas*. The Vedas and *Sivāgamas* adore her temple. The temple of Iśvari who is praised by *Yoga Yāmaḷa Sāstras*, is liked by all the eight *gaṇanāthas*. In her temple, Vishnu learns Śivagñāna *Saiva Siddhānta Sāstra* taught by Śivamahādeva. Likewise Brahma and Indra recite the *Śiva Āgamas*. In the front yard of the temple, the divine damsels like Urvasi and Rambha pay obesience.

The *Yoginis* in the temple of Paramesvari, resembled *Mohinis* not by their own beauty but by constantly medidating upon the goddess who herself was Mohini. Some damsels in the temple of Paramesvari were called *Carmiṇi*. *Carmiṇis* are those who cover themselves with skin.[1] But here the *Carmiṇis* were the bearers of Dēvi's feet. The *Śākinis* whose number could not easily be counted were the standard bearers of the Dēvi.[2] According to the commentator the *Śākinis* are women, born of Brahmin mothers of the love of Śiva.

The work is also remarkable for the information it provides on the followers of *Yāmala Tantra* in their worship of Kāli. The followers of *Mayānavāsinī* are the *mantra Sādhakas* who put on the dress of Bhairava (*Bhairava vesha*) and are called *Bhairavas* in the text and *Bhairava Veshadhāri* in the commentary. They will select the sensitive heads among themselves, severe and offer them to the goddess as flowers, *sira pushpas* which are heaped as mountains. Since the land of the goddess is the dry desert, all the heads would be charred and burnt to ashes by the heat of the desert. The disciples of these *mantra sādhakas*, coming to do *archana* and desirous of carrying the *sirapushpas* as *nirmālya*, will laugh on seeing the heads charred to ashes.[3] The Commentator says "the *Yāmaḷāchāryas* are those who are well versed in the *Sakala Pañchakas* which are liquor, fish, flesh, sign and sexual union (*Madhu*, *Matsya*, *Māmsa*, *Mudra* and *Maithuna*). This information is available in the *Āgama Sāstras* of the *Mahāvratin*". The above note of the commentator shows that there were practisioners of the *Sakala pañchaka* in Tamil Nadu, in the 12th century A.D.

The *mantra sādhakas* of the *Yāmaḷa sāstras* of Paramesvari, will cut their own heads, but prevent their lives being extinquished and retain it in their bodies by their *Yoga*. Then standing before Paramesvari in rare poses, kindle their *Yogic* fire (*Yogāgni*), and light the halo of fire *agni maṇḍala* in the naval part of their body (*nābhī kamala*) and allow the lamp of *hṛidaya kamala* (the lotus of heart) to burn as a perpetual lamp. This[4] is undoubtedly an interesting reference to the *Yogic* practises of the *Mantra sādhakas*, who believed that after offering their heads, they could raise their *kuṇḍalini śakti* and allow it to burn the lamp of heart. It must be remembered that the word *Yoga yāmaḷā* referring to the goddess indicates the *Yogic* tilt of the text.

Some *Mantrasādhakas* will cut their hearts and head, and their remaining trunk will circumambulate the Dēvi temple with folded hands.[5] This is expressed in a fine

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1. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer (Ed.), *op. cit.*, V. 88 (Commentary).
2. *Ibid.*, v. 89.
3. *Ibid.*, v. 51.
4. *Ibid.*, v. 91.
5. *Ibid.*, v. 92.

poetic form. 'When they cut *hṛdaya kamala*, their *vadana kamala* (face) will blossom and when their *Vadana kamala* was severed, their *hridaya kamala* would blossom. When both were cut, their hands will fold as a *Kamala* (*Kara Kamala*) and the trunk will circumambulate the temple'. It only shows that when they cut the limbs of their body, they never screamed in pain but learnt to bear with it and even rejoice at it.

Some *mantra sādhakas* wore black shirts with rows of cowrie shells stitched on to it.[1] The Lord Bhairava himself is called *Kariya Kanjugan*, wearer of black-shirt. Some *Mantra sādhakas* will place lamps on their body and head and burn them in front of the deity. This peculiar custom has survived to this day. In the temple of Vaidhesvaran Koil in Thanjavur district, people take a vow to burn such lamps. They lie in front of the deity with a lamp on their chest or on their forehead. They lie in the same position with the lamps filled with ghee and lit, till the lamps burn themselves out. Probably this is a survival of one of the *Śākta* cult referred to in the above verse.[2]

In the temple of the Dēvi, there are five flower gardens, consisting of *Kalpa*, *Pārijāta*, *Mandara*, *Cantana* and *Arichandana* trees. The five flowers of Manmatha, namely *Mā*, *Asoka*, *Kamala*, *Mullai* and *Kuvaḷai*, can not penetrate into these gardens. (*i.e.*, these are pure and kept free of cupid's sports).

In the temple of Dēvi, the main *Yāmaḷas* like the *Brahma Yāmaḷas* and the secondary *Yāmaḷas* numbering 91, and the 18 purānas (*Brahmāṇḍa purāna* is the first, *Vishnu Purāna* the middle and the *Kūshmāṇḍa purāna* the last) praise the greatness of the goddess. Obviously they were studied in the temple.

Some followers will be dancing violently when the drum called *Tuḍi* was beaten. Some would move around and cut to pieces the vultures. Some would capture the tigers alive, skin them and wear their skins as garments, with blood still oozing out from them.[3] Some would wear the *Ūmattai* flowers on their head and move about, with tridents in their hand[4] and yet others will capture eight deadly serpants, and tie them around their waist as belts. There were others who will insert human skulls into these snakes and tie the same as waist band.[5] Probably some tied them on their hands also. When heroic people fell (in encounters) some would take in their fingers the blood from the intestine and wear it as *tilaka* on their foreheads. They would also be wearing thirteen chank-shell chains in their arms.[6] Yet others would carry *vajra* in their right arms and shields in their left arms.[7] There were also others who would wear green leaves as garments and be adoring *cakras* till such time that their bodily heat burns up the green leaves.[8]

1. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer (Ed.), *op. cit.*, v. 93.
2. *Ibid.*, v. 60.
3. *Ibid.*, v. 97.
4. *Ibid.*, v. 98.
5. *Ibid.*, v. 99.
6. *Ibid.*, v. 100.
7. *Ibid.*, v. 101.
8. *Ibid.*, v. 102.

In short Indra, Agni, Varuna, Vāyu, Chandra, Sūrya, Nakshatras and all other Brahmas are *Mantra Sādhakas* in the temple of the Dēvi and they also received fame and prosperity (*aisvarya*) by their *Sādhanas*. The women who do personal service to the Goddess are Lakshmi, Saraswati and other *Pradhāna* stars, who are the *Yoginis* performing *Yoganishṭa.*

PERIYAPURĀṆAM

Tirumuṛai

The Śaiva tradition has collected all the devotional literature and compiled them into twelve books called the twelve *Tirumurais*. The twelth is *Tiruttoṇḍar purāṇam*[1] popularly called *Periyapurāṇam*. The work deals with the life of Śaivite saints traditionally accepted as sixty-three.

Sekkiḻār

Sekkilār, the author of this work was a minister to one of the Chola ruler, Kulottunga II in the 12th century. Sekkilār was a fine historian of his period. On account of his ministerial training he had great love for records and contemporary events which he portrayed in his work with remarkable lucidity. Thus it is the most outstanding literature of the period, to which scholars turn for an understanding of the society of the age.

As he himself was steeped in Śaiva tradition, Sekkilār took up for his subject, the lives of Saivite saints as originally told by Saint Sundaramūrti in the 8th century and later elaborated by Nambiānḍār Nambi in the 11th century A.D. As its main purpose was to extol the greatness of Saivite saints, especially the events leading to their saint-hood, *Periyapurāṇam* mainly deals with intense devotion to Lord Śiva. As, the cult of *Śakti*, has developed to a great extent, it is undoubtedly reflected in the work.

The concept of *Ammai appa*, Universal parenthood, has already reached the final form and is referred to in many episodes. In fact while bestowing grace on the saints, Śiva always appears with his consort Śakti.

Begins with Love

As opposed to the principles of negation of worldly life (*Sanyāsa*), the work begins with an acceptance of worldly pleasures, especially carnal love as the beginning of the story. Though the work deals with the lives of 63 saints, Saint Sundaramūrthi is the hero of the poem. Śaint Śundara was an attendent of Śiva in his previous birth. He fell in love with two girl-attendents of Śakti where upon Śiva directed him to be born in the world and get his love towards the girls consumated. So begins the story.

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[1] **Tirutondarpurānam of Sekkilar Srivaikuntam, 1964.**

This we consider an important departure from other schools, where time and again, the worldly pleasures are despised as perils to God-realisation. In this significant text, we will refer to the attributes and other manifestations of Dēvi and also descriptions of some followers of *Bhairava* cult, which has some bearing on our subject.

Tavakkoḍi

Dēvi witnessing the dance of Naṭarāja at Chidambaram is called the creeper of Penance—*Meytavakkoḍi.*[1] This Dēvi, the mother of the seven world, did penance on the banks of the river Kampā at Kanchi and obtained Śiva as her husband.[2]

She is the ruler of the Universe—*Ulagam Āḷuḍaiyāḷ.* Śiva taught her the *Āgamas*, on mount Kailāsa, and told her, that the *pūja* as prescribed in *Āgamas* was the one he loved most. There upon the Dēvi expressed a desire to do the *pūja* of the Lord.[3] Śiva conceded her request and directed her to do the worship at Kānchipuram under the mango tree. As she proceded to Kanchi, the serpent king Padmanāga approached her uttering the *panchākshara mantra* (*Namaśivāya*). Śiva manifested under the mango tree. Dēvi began her worship which consisted of *Tirumanjana* (sacred bath), *gandha*, *dīpa*, *dhūpa*, etc. as prescribed in the Āgamas. To test her devotion, Śiva made the river Kampā, to suddenly overflow with floods. Dēvi out of her intense love, immediately embraced the *linga* she was worshipping. Śiva appeared before her and blessed her. Dēvi wanted her remaining worship also to be accepted by the Lord where upon Śiva said that he was so pleased with her worship, he would receive it for ever from her hands. In order that the entire world will ever rejoice in married life, She stationed herself at Kamakoṭṭam the temple of Kāmākshi at Kanchi. This story of Dēvi doing *pūja* at Kanchi has a greater significance which we will discuss at later stage. Here we are to note a few points of interest.

(1) That the *Āgamic* mode of worship knew no barrier of sex or caste. It was absolutely in order, for Dēvi, a female to do *pūja* as prescribed in the *Āgamas.*

(2) The chapter in which this episode is narrated is not directly connected with Dēvi but with the life of one saint Tirukkurippu tonḍar who hailed from Kanchi. Sekkilār has chosen the subject of Kanchi as the native place of this saint, to describe the episode of Dēvi's worship. This is a deliberate attempt to accomodate the legend of Dēvi as otherwise the whole work is mainly on the Śaiva saints. This shows that the cult of *Kāmakkoṭṭam* has attained greater popularity.

(3) Thirdly we have noticed the advent of the serpent king Padmanāga. We are not sure how this finds a place here. Probably it is a survival of an earlier belief associating Dēvi with *Nāga*, the significance of which has been lost now.

(4) Fourthly, the Dēvi is described here, as the Mother who has given birth to everything in the Universe.

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[1] Tirutondarpurānam of Sekkilar, Srivaikuntam, *op. cit.*, 1: 1: 32.
[2] *Ibid.*, 1: 1: 34.
[3] *Ibid.*, 2: 19: 51-52.

(5) That she is the destroyer of the birth cycles is also mentioned.

Wife Gifted

In the life of Saint Iyarpahai,[1] we have another interesting fact of the *Śaiva* cult. Iyarpahai was a merchant and a great Śiva *bhakta.* Śiva who appeared at the doors of his house as a Brahmin was received with all respects and courtesy. On being asked the purpose of his visit, the Brahmin said, he would put forth his request if Iyarpahai would agree to grant it. The merchant replied immediately saying that to please a Śiva *bhakta*, he would place at his feet his entire possession. The Brahmin there upon told the merchant, that he came to the merchant's house to take away his wife. The merchant agreed to gift away his own wife to the Brahmin. But the mendicant asked the merchant to give him protection till he was able to reach a safe place. With a sword in hand, the merchant went in front of them, offering protection. But the clan of the merchant who came to know of this ghastly episode tried to intercept the Brahmin. But the merchant put them to sword. Thereupon Śiva blessed him. This story thus depicts an extrodinary event, in which a man gifts away his own wife to a *bhakta.* It is perhaps an indication to the one pointed devotion of the Śiva *bhaktas.*

Mahāvratin

The story of Mānakkanjārar[2] another saint, gives us an insight into the mode of dress and behaviour of a *Mahāvrati sanyāsin.* Mānakkanjārar arranged for the marriage of his only daughter. On the day of marriage, Śiva as a *Mahāvrati sanyāsin* came to his house. His request was a curious one. He requested Mānakkanjārar to cut the long hair of his daughter and give it to him for *panchavaṭi.* The removal of hair of a woman is considered very inauspicious as it is a symbol of widowhood. This *sanyāsin*, demanded the removal of the hair of a young girl on the day of her marriage. This was done, out of devotion.

The description of the *Mahāvratin* who thus appeared is interesting. A part of the head was shaven and on the remaining *śikhā*, bone beads were tied; *kuṇḍalas* adorned his earlobes; the necklace consisted of bone-beads; a *pāṭaka* resembling a snake was on the shoulders; his *upavīta* was made of hairs; the *sanyāsin* was carrying a bag of sacred ashes; in his front arm was tied a *sūtra* (thread) with a bead; He was wearing a rag of cloth to cover his private part and on his feet were the five *mudras* (*Pancha mudras*). This *sanyasin* is called *Māvrata muṇḍi* in the text.

Bhairava veshadhāri

The most striking information on the followers of Bhairava faith is furnished by the story of saint Siruttoṇḍar.[3] The story is briefly as follows : Siruttoṇḍar once a commander of a Pallava ruler, who conquered Vātāpi, turned a Śaiva saint and was known for his devotion to Saivite devotees. Śiva appeared before him as a

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[1] Tirutondarpurānam of Sekkilar Srivaikuntam, *op. cit.*, 2: 3.

[2] *Ibid*, 2: 12.

[3] *Ibid.*, 2: 36.

Sanyāsin of the *Bhairava* sect, *Bhairava Veshadhāri*. (From this we learn how *Bhairavins* of the mediaeval periods dressed).

The saint was wearing a dishevelled hair and over the black hair wore a garland of white *kurumbai* flowers; and on the forehead sacred ashes resembling crescent moon. In the earlobes, ear rings made of chank shell, set with a red flower were worn; the necklace consisted of stone beads of white marble; the body was covered with black *kanjuka* (shirt) over which *channavīra*, *hāra*, *vāta*, armlets, *kaṭisūtra*, anklets, etc., all made of bone-beads were worn. A *silambu* adorned his feet. In the left hand he was carrying a *kapāla* and over the left shoulder a *triśūla* was rested and in the right arm, he was carrying a *damaruka*.

The Śiva *sanyāsin* wearing this *Bhairava vēsha* approached Siruttoṇḍar with one of the strangest and ghastliest demand of food. The request was this; A boy being the only progeny of the family, should be cut to pieces by his father helped by his mother. The flesh of the boy should be cooked and offered to him as food. The Sanyāsin demanded even the head of the boy to be cooked and offered to him.

The story goes that Siruttoṇḍar helped by his wife cut his only son, cooked his flesh and offered it to the *Sanyāsin*. The *Sanyāsin* asked Siruttoṇḍar also to eat the food, but asked him to call his son to dine with them. The miracle happened when Siruttoṇḍar called his son. The boy who was cut to pieces and cooked came running from a distance with joy. Lord Śiva in the company of Śakti and their son Skanda, appeared before Siruttoṇḍar and blessed him for his extrodinary devotion.

The legend apart, we are given to understand that such *Bhairavaveshadhārins* existed, who ate human flesh. The dark black shirt, the bone garlands, *kapāla*, *sūla* and *darmaruka* being carried in their arms, are some of their characteristics which are seen represented in sculptures of the period.

We have given this account, though it is not directly connected with Sākta cult, because of the close relationship between the *Śāktas* and *Bhairavins*.

Apart from these points of interest, one dominating element throughout this work, deserve mention, in relation to *Śākta* cult. In all the events leading to saintdom of the 63 devotees, Śiva appears in the company of Śakti, and blesses them. This shows that Saivism of this period has completely assimilated the finer aspects *Śakti* cult which is reflected in monumental architecture as well.

Dēvi Temple Worshipped First

We have noticed earlier, that at Kanchipuram, there was a temple seperately dedicated to Śakti in the name of Kāmakkoṭṭam. This Dēvi considered the consort of Lord, is the presiding deity of Ekambaresvara. Saint Sundaramūrṭi, one of the three *Devāram* hymnists, on his return voyage to Tiruvarur visited Kanchi.[1] He first went to the temple of Kāmakkoṭṭam and offered worship before going to the temple of Ekambaresvara. This shows the importance gained by the temples of Śakti.

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[1] Tirutondarpurānam of Sekkilar Srivaikuntam, *op. cit.*, 2: 29: 284.

III

TANTRISM IN TAMIL DEVOTIONAL LITERATURE

TIRUVIḶAYAḌALPURĀṆAM

Sixty-four legends connected with the sports of the presiding deity of the Lord of Madurai, form the theme of two outstanding Tamil works, by the name *Tiruviḷayāḍal-purāṇam.*[1] The earlier one is by Perumbarrappuliyūr Nambi who is assigned to 13th century A.D. Paranjoti who elaborated the same in excellant poetry, is assigned to 18th century. We are mainly concerned with the former. All the sixty-four sports portray the greatness of Śiva, and we have very little said of the greatness of Śakti. Among the sports, one is significant. It refers to the birth of Taṭātagai (Mīnākshi) as the daughter of Malayadhvaja Pāṇḍya. She had three breasts from her birth. It was told that if she met her would-be husband, the third breast would disappear. Taṭātaka, though a girl, succeded her father to the throne, a rare case of a princess ruling the country. She conquerred all her opponents and won victories in all the directions. At last Śiva appeared before her, on seeing whom, her third breast vanished. Śiva married her and assumed the rulership of the Pāṇḍya country.

In this story relating to Mīnākshi, we get no reference to the *Sākta* cult or concepts.

In the invocatory verses of the text there is an invocation to Mīnākshi, who is described as the giver of wealth and knowledge.[2] In the chapter on Madurai city, there are two significant verses. One describes Durgā, as *Kanya.*[3] She was the destroyer of Mahishāsura and the protector of the city. Her temple was in south, where perpetual lamps were burnt. Her colour is described as green.

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1. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer (Ed)., Tiruvilaiyadarpuranam of Perumparrapuliyar Nambi, 1927.
2. *Ibid.*, v. 7.
3. *Ibid.*, P. 20, v. 12.

The other is Kāli who is described as the protector of the city in its northern direction. She was the destroyer of Dārukāsura and was the giver of victory. Her name was Selli.[1]

That the city was protected by Durgā, Vishṇu and Kāli is again referred to in verse 53-16.

As Perumbarrappuliyur Nambi, the author of this text is assigned to 13th century A.D., it is evident that in the layout of the cities, Durgā and Kāli, continued to play important roles as protectors and were worshipped during that period. Secondly legends were beginning to appear on the Dēvi as consort of Śiva though the miracles are still centered around the Lord.

As the second work on the same theme by Paranjoti, is late it falls outside our present study.

DEVARAM HYMNS

The *Bhakti* movement spearheaded by the Śaivite saints and Vaishnavite *Āḻvārs* was mainly responsible for the development of temples and arts. Their songs made the hearts of millions of devotees melt in devotion and gave a divine joy which could not be achieved by any material acquistions. But for their works, the Tamil land would have been a dry land of people living and dying like herds of sheep.

Appar, Jñānasambandar and Sundarar are the three shining stars in the horizon of Saivite literature. They have sung several hundred verses on Śiva, enshrined in various temples of Tamil land. Towards the end of the 13th century, their works were collected and codified as the first seven books of the Śaivite canon. Sambandar's poems are included in the first three books and Appar's poems constitute the 4th, 5th and 6th; Sundarar's work form the 7th. They are called *Devārams* in Tamil. The word *Devāram* is interpretted in two ways : (1) *Deva+āram i.e.* a divine garland and (2) *De vāram i.e.* the hymn to be offered regularly to the gods. May be both the meanings were intended. They are all in hymns of ten verses each and are sung in praise of presiding deities of various temples. Some temples like Chidambaram have many hymns sung by the saints. They visited on foot temples, from Kanyakumari in the south to Kalahasti in the north and instilled in the minds of the people intimate longing for divinehood.

Among the three, Appar and Jñānasambandar were contemporaries. Appar was born of a Śaiva Vellala family and in his early age was fascinated by the Jaina faith. Later he returned to his parent faith and took up the task of spreading *bhakti* among the masses. His return to the Śaiva faith angered the Jain monks who are said to have influenced the Pallava ruler to persecute him. Having failed in his persecution the Pallava ruler himself was converted to Śaivism. This Pallava ruler is none other than

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1. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer (Ed.), Tiruvilaiyadarpuranam of Perumparrapuliyar Nambi, P. 20, v. 14.

that versatile genius, Mahendra I. Though the story of persecution may not be true, Mahendra's change of faith is mentioned in the Tirachirappalli cave inscription,[1] where he says that he embraced Śaivism from an alien faith. I have discussed this inscription and the date of Appar elsewhere.[2] Mahendra ruled from A.D. 590 to 630. Appar must, therefore, be assigned to the first half of the 7th century A.D. He lived upto a ripe age of 80 years.

Jñānasambandar, a younger contemporary of Appar had a very short life of 16 years. While Appar converted the Pallava ruler, Jñānasambandar converted the Pāndya ruler, Arikesari Māravarman, who came to the throne about A.D. 650.

Sundaramūrti lived a century later. He refers in his hymn to a Pallava ruler who is identified with Rājasimha, and should be assigned to the 8th century A.D.

In the hymns of these three great saints, the main deity receiving adoration is Śiva, but Umā is invariably mentioned in her various associations with Śiva. In almost all the exploits of Śiva, she is an active participator.

The following aspects of the Dēvi are mentioned in their hymns. The Dēvi wears a *jaṭāmakuṭa*, in which are Ganga and the crescent moon. The Dēvi plays with *Kantuka* and parrot (*Pandum kiḷiyum payilum pāvai*). In the Kailāsanātha temple of Kanchi, Durgā is shown playing with *Kantuga* (balls). In all her representations the parrot is also shown. That she resides in the half of Śiva as Ardhanāri is frequently referred to. That Dēvi is said to wear ashes (*vibhūti*) on her body is also mentioned. She is said to wear the red silken garment (which is called *Kośikapaṭṭu*). That she is Tripurasundari, who destroyed the three cities is mentioned by Appar. The arm that carried the bow in the destruction of Tripura is the hand of the Dēvi-*Tripuram seṟṟa Angaiyāḷ*.

One interesting aspect of Dēvi is that She is the giver of grains (*Vasundharā*). She is said to have protected *dharma* by distributing paddy seeds. This concept is alluded to even in the 8th century, in a verse of Sundarar—*Taiyalāḷ Ulaguyya Vaitta Kārirum poḻil Kacci*.

Dēvi is the presiding deity of the cemetery *Suḍalaināri*. She is Ādiśakti among Śaktis (*Saktiyāḷ Ādiyōr Taiyal*). She is young Kumari, *Ilamādu*. She has no equal (*Samānādhika varjitā* of *Lalita Sahasranāma*). She is identical with Mahālakshmi—*Peruntiru, Peruntirumakaḷ*. She is of golden colour—*Ponnin Uruvanta meni Umā* (*Hiranyavarṇā*). She performs penance *tapas*.

An interesting reference which however is not reflected in sculpture is that Dēvi sings songs while Śiva dances—*Gītam Umai pāḍa Vedamudalvar ninuṟāḍum*. Dēvi worshipped Śiva with great love. Dēvi is the author and exponent of the vedas—*Umai uṛai seyyum avaḷ maṛai oliya*. She is the embodiment of music, and carries fire in her arms.

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1. South Indian Inscriptions. Vol. 1 no. 33.
2. Dr. V. Raghavan, 60th birthday Felicitation volume.

The above references are sufficient to show that various concepts connected with Śakti are already known to the 7th, 8th century *Devaram* hymns. It is also interesting that various sculptural representatous in the Kailāsanātha temple Kanchi reflect these *Devaram* hymns rather than the later day silpa texts. In the chapter on Kailāsanātha temple, I have shown the representation of Dēvi in her various manifestations and the references in the *Devaram* hymns to all these aspects are thus interesting.

TIRUVĀCHKAM

Mānickavācrakar

Tiruvācakam[1] is a collection of soul stirring devotional hymns by Saint Mānickavācaka. He is held in very high esteem by followers of south Indian Śaivism and his poems are marked by a direct appeal to the Lord couched in different poetic expressions. Two collections of poems are assigned to him : (1) the *Tiruvācakam* and (2) the *Tirukkovaiyār*, consisting of verses describing love longings but intended to extol the greatness of the Lord of Chidambaram. So the second one is also called *Chirrambalakkovai.*

His Date

The date of Mānickavācaka is strongly debated. Scholars who hold the saint in high reverence find in his writing evidence to date him to the 2nd and 3rd century A.D. Other scholars would place him in the 9th century A.D. In his poems, the saint refers to a Pāṇḍya ruler Varaguna as a great devotee of Śiva. Recent epigraphical researches prove that he could be Varaguna II, who ascended the throne in A.D. 862.[2] He seems to have been a saintly ruler, described as one who ruled the country ever enshring Lord Śiva in his heart. Though he was the crowned ruler, his brother Parāntaka Vīranārāyana held the reins of the kingdom and issued records in his own regnal years. Evidently Varaguna being a pious ruler, entrusted the rule to his brother. The language of Mānickavācaka's hymns and the highly developed concepts given expression to would not place him earlier than the 9th century A.D.

Tiruvembāvai

Of all his poems, the most popular, called *Tiruvembāvai*, is of great interest for our study. It consists of 20 verses all of them ending with the words "*Mārkaḻi nīr āḍelo rembāvāy*" and hence called the sacred *Embāvāi* (*Tiruvembavāi*). It exhorts young girls to come out of their houses for taking bath in the early hours of the morning in the month of *Mrigasirā*. Even to this day the practice is maintained, in that people get up in the early hours of the morning in the month of Mrigsirā and go to take bath in a river or pond nearby singing these poems.

In all the known manuscripts, the poem has the caption *Saktiyai Viyantatu i.e.* extolling Śakti.

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1. *Tiruvachakam*, Ed., Saiva Sidhanda Samajam, Saiva Siddhanda Publishing Society, Tiruvavaduthurai.
2. A.S. Gnanasambandam, *Manikkavachakar*, Annamalai University, 1974.

While all the poems of Mānickavācakar are addressed to Lord Śiva this alone has the distinction of being related to *Śakti.* According to tradition the first nine verses of this poem are intended for the nine *Śaktis,* each *Śakti* waking up the other. The first verse stands for Manonmaṇi waking up Sarvabhūtadamani.

Sarvabhūtadamani, waking Balapramathani
Balapramathani waking Balavikarini
Balavikarini waking Kalavikarini
Kalavikarini waking Kāli
Kāli waking Raudri
Raudri waking Jyēshṭā and
Jyeshṭā waking Vāma.

All the nine *Saktis* praise the greatness of Lord.[1] This is the accepted tradition by most of the followers of Saivism. But the late Pandit M. Raghava Iyengar has drawn our attention to many references to this custom of bathing in the early hours of the morning in the month of *Mṛgasirā* or *Tishya* in Tamil and Sanskrit literature. He has shown that this tradition is connected with the worship of Kātyāyani, also called Ambā. His contribution forms a brilliant chapter in the history of south Indian *Śakti* cult and is worth recording.[2]

Mārgali Nōnbu

"The worship is called *Mārgali vow.* Though from the commentary of Periyavaccan Pillai, on *Tiruppāvai* hymns of Āṇḍāl, it is seen that the celebration has no vedic sanction, it is evident from various references in Tamil and Sanskrit works, there was a hoary tradition relating to this *Vrata.* Both the Śaivites and Vaishnavites celebrate to this day, this festival of Margali month.

According to Periyavāccān Pillai, the commentator on the hymns of Āṇḍāl, the following is the origin of this festival. "Once there was drought in Gokula. The *Āyas* (*Gopālās*) selected Krishna as their leader and made their own girls celebrate this festival. Accordingly Krishna, the girls, and their mates were woken up and led to the river Yamunā, where they took bath. After celebrating this worship obtained Krishna as their husbands as desired by them."

The source for this commentary was obviously the 22nd *Adhyāya* of the tenth *skandha* of *Srimad Bhāgavata.* According to this source, the girls of Gokula began the workship of *Katyāyani pūja* at the end of *hemanta ṛtu.* They continued the worship, eating *havis.* Before dawn they got up and took bath in the river Yamunā. In the wet sand they made the figure of Kātyāyanī Dēvi and worshipped her with sandal, flowers, fruits, etc. and prayed "Kātyāyani he Mahāmaye; Mahāyogini, Isvarī we adore Thee, grant us Krishna, the son of Nandagopala as our husband". Repeating this request they continued their worship for one month. One day Krishna appeared

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1. S. Dandapani Desikar, *Tiruvachakam,* Notes Dharmapuram, 1949.
2. M. Ragava Iyangar, *Āraichi Tohuti* (Tamil), Madras, 1964.

at the river bank and hid their garments as they were taking bath. Finally when they prayed to him, Krishna said, "with whatever longings you all adored Kātyāyani those will be fulfilled and you will attain me this night". From the above commentary two facts stand out prominently viz. virgins performed this *Mārgaḷi pūja* in praise of Kātyāyani : (*i*) praying for rain and (*ii*) praying for suitable husbands.

"From such expressions as *Nam Pāvaikku Seyyum Krisaikaḷ* (from our rites to our *Pāvai*) etc., the term *Pāvai* stands for Dēvi is evident. We must note that *Kātyāyani Pūja* was performed irrespective of Vaishnavite or Saivite faiths.

"The hymns of Mānikkavācaka on *Mārgali Pūja* are said to have been sung at Tiruvannamalai, according to the *Tiruvādavūrār purānam* in which it said that the Dēvi as the destroyer of Vikramāsura as Mahisha, was adored. The *Tiruvālavāyuḍiyār purāṇa* mentions that these hymns were sung at Tirupperunturai. Just as Āṇḍāl prays for rain in *Tiruppāvai*, Mānikkavācaka also in his verses prays for plenty of rain and it is therefore evident, that both these traditions have common aim. The tradition that the first nine verses of Mānickavācaka relate to the nine *Śaktis* does not seem to be correct. When there are twenty verses all having the common aim and ending, it is not correct to say that only the first nine have references to Śakti. We must take it that the entire hymn is in praise of Kātyāyani.

"One of the poems by Nallanduvanār in *Paripāḍal* collection refers to *Ambā Āḍal*, in the month of *Tai*. The verse states that this worship was done by virgins, praying for rains. They bathed in the early hours of the morning and stood adoring the Vedic altars. The poet called it *Ambāvāḍal* which evidently stands for the worship of Dēvi.

"Though the poems mentioned earlier refer to the worship as *Mārgali*, this poem calls it *Tai* (The month of *Tishya*). This need not puzzle us; one accounts probably followed the *Chāndramāna* tradition, while the other the *Sauramāna* tradition which in essence are the same. The Sangam works *Kalitogai* (59), *Aingurunūru* (84) and *Naṛṛiṇai* (22) refer to *Tai nīrāḍal*.

"All evidences would point out that the worship was originally devoted to Kātyāyani by Virgins, praying for rains and suitable husbands. In due course the original tradition was forgotten and the worship came to be associated with the Lord and the exclusive worship by virgins discontinued.

"The echo of this ancient tradition is still found in the Malabar country where *Tiruvādirai* is celebrated."

This some what long summary of the late Aiyangar's researches prove that Mānikkavācakar's *Tiruvenbāvai* hymns were intended to be sung in *Kātyāyani vrata*. However, Śiva is extolled in the verses themselves. The prayers are rains and *Śivabhaktas* as husbands.

Our Mother

However, verse 14 of the poem directly extols the lotus feet of the Dēvi :

பேதித்து நம்மை வளர்த்தெடுத்த பெய்வளைதன்
பாதத்திறம் பாடி ஆடேலோர் எம்பாவாய்.

Kāli and Umā Blessed

In addition to *Tiruvembāvai*, hymns, Mānikkavācaka refers to the association of Śakti with Śiva in some of his other hymns. In *Kīrti Tiruvahaval* the Cosmic Dancer of Chidambaram is said to have bestowed grace on both Umā and Kāli.

> பொலிதரு புலியூர் பொதுவினில் நடநவில்
> கவிதரு செவ்வாயுமையோடு காளிக்கு
> அருளிய திருமுகத் தழகுறு சிறுநகை இறைவன்.

When Dārukāsura was killed by Kāli in a fierce battle, no one could subdue Her wrath and her destruction went unabated. Śiva, therefore, began dancing a wild dance which brought Kāli to senses. This episode is what is referred to in this verse.

It is interesting to mention that in stone sculptures representing Naṭarāja, Pārvati is portrayed on one side witnessing the dance and Kāli is seen dancing behind Śiva. The earliest example of this comes from a cave excavated by one of the commanders of the Pāndya ruler Parāntaka Neḍunjaḍaiyan in 8th century A.D. The other best illustration comes from Gangaikoṇḍa Cholapuram, built in 11th century A.D. The remarkable fresco at Thanjavur also portrays this episode.

Māyā Śakti

In his *Pōrri Tiru Ahaval*, Mānikavacaka refers to six crores of Māyā Śakti :

> ஆறுகோடி மாயா சக்திகள்
> வேறு வேறுதம் மாயைகள் தொடங்கின.
> (வரிகள் : 44-45)

This six crore Māyā Śaktis are also referred to in *Tirumandiram.* This number six crore stands for innumerable manifestations of Śakti.

In other hymn, called *Porchunnam* Śiva is said to manifest and bestow grace in the company of His consort Śakti.

Describing the cause of Śiva's dance, a verse in *Thiruchchālal* (268) says that had Śiva not resorted to dance, the entire universe would have become, meat to the *Kāligana*. Metaphorically it means the Universe will be a place of chaos if Śiva remained an idle spectator. In order to bestow grace, Śiva danced. Here again, there is the vieled reference to Śiva subduing Kāli who continued to remain ferocious after the destruction of Dāruka.

Śakti resides in Śiva and Śiva in Śakti and both resides in the heart of the devotees (*Koyil mūtta Tiruppadigam*). The verse 536, refers to the concept of Universal parentage as *Ammai Appar*.

There is a hymn consisting of ten verses, under the name *puṇarchi pattu. Puṇarthal* means uniting. The word is often used to denote sexual intercourse. Hence the commentators of this poem say that this relates to the union of the Soul with Śiva, which may be called *Advaitic* intercourse (*Advaitakkalavi*). We are not sure whether this concept is a mere poetic probibility or whether it is due to the impact of *Vāmāchāra.*

Essentially Śaivism

Mānickavācaka has left 656 verses in *Tiruvācakam*, all of which extol the greatness of Śiva only. We have seen there are references here and there to the aspects of Śakti as universal mother who manifests with Śiva and also the reference to *Kātyāyani vrata.* But neither the *Tantric* cult, as reflected in *Tirumandiram*, nor that Śiva actuates the Universe through *Śakti*, find any prominence. Hence Mānikkavācaka's expressions reflect the pure Śaivism, of the *Suddha Saiva* school.

TIRUMANDIRAM

One of the most remarkable works of *Sāstric* nature in Tamil language is *Tirumandiram*[1] by Tirumūla deva. The work consisting of 3000 verses under nine chapter called *Tantras*, is also called *Tirumandira mālā* and is included as the tenth book in the *Śaiva* canon. Tirumūladeva was probably a cowherd and his life as usual is wrapped in a mystic legend. As he is mentioned by Sekkilār, he should be assigned to a period earlier them 12th century. His work is full of mystic utterences based on *Tantras* and has not been subjected to modern critical studies. S. Dandapani Desikar, a modern commentator has said that "this work has been studied only with lingustic chauvanism and religious fanaticism and a rational study is yet to be made". S. Desikar's commentary is valuable and to the extent possible reflects the sense of the poems which are to a great extent still obscure.

"Tirumūlar gives out the experience both in a classical language and of the masses; the ecstatic outpourings of a siddha are also there in his work. These three elements perhaps tend to make his poetry uneven and a little obscure in places although the overwhelming ecstacy of experience and the flash of brilliance are always present."[2]

The Author

A glimpse into the life of Tirumular, is got from his own works and also the tradition preserved in Sekkilar's *Periyapurāṇam.*

Sundaranātha

The original name of Tirumūlar seems to be Sundaranātha.[3]

தந்திரம் ஒன்பது சார்வு மூவாயிரம்
சுந்தரன் ஆகமச் சொன் மொழிந்தானே.
(வரிகள் : 101)

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[1] "Thirumandiram", a. Saiva Siddhanda Publishing Society, Madras.
b. Tiruvavaduturai Ed.
c. Saiva Siddhanda Samajan Publication.

[2] 'An Introduction to history of Tamil Literature', by M. Arunachalam, Madras, 1974, P. 144.

[3] Tirumandiram, verse 101.

In the work "*Mantra three hundred*" the name Sundaranātha is specifically mentioned :

மந்திரங் கொண்டு வழிபடுவோர்க்கு
சுந்தரநாதன் சொல்லிய மந்திரம்.

It is evident that the original name of this saint was Sundaranātha.

The Legend

"With a desire to meet sage Agastya, Sundaranātha came to Tamil Nadu, from north Kailāsa, after crossing Kedāra, Nepāla, Avimukta and other places. When he came to Sattanur near Tiruvāḍuturai, he found the cowherd Tirumūlan lying dead and his cows crying pitifully near him. Out of compassion for them, Sundaranātha left his own body and entered into the body of Mūlan. Subsequently his own body was lost and he had to remain in the body of Mūlan. Sundaranātha in the body of Mūlan was the author of *Tirumandiram*". This is the story[1] given by Sekkilār in his *Periya-purāṇam*. Though this is only a legend preserved in tradition it is important for reconstructing the history of the text.

Divination

It has been a hoary custom to trace the origin of any religious text to heaven such as Kailasa in the case of Śaivism and Vaikunta in the case of Vaishnavism, in order that it may assume sacredness. Further, some mysterious and at the same time divine episodes are narrated to give the origin of any text, a status of authority. Innumerable examples could be cited. It is not in any way different in the case of *Tirumandiram* and its author. Historions have, however, to confine themselves to realities.

In the case of Tirumūlar two facts stand out prominently. As Sundaranātha he came from Kailāsa, *via* Kedāra and Nepāla. The second, is that he is said to have entered the body of Mūlan. Probably Sundaranātha was the teacher and Mūlan was his disciple. Mūlan so ably put forth the teachings of his master, it was considered that he was none other than Sundaranātha himself.

Judging from the expressions of *Tirumandiram*, it is evident that only a person steeped in Tamil language and tradition could express such subtle and intricate philosophic thoughts in such a mystic language. The tradition that he is a native of Sattanur corraborates the evidence.

According *Tirumandiram*, the nine *Tantras* constituting this book were based on nine *āgamas*. It is believed that quite a considerable number of *āgamas* had their origin in South India and what Tirumūlar tried to synthesize in his work was, the then prevelant belief. Thus it is evident that his work reflects the faiths prevelant in the native region.

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[1] Tirutondarpurānam, 2: 30: 1:—28.

However, in the process of this remarkable synthesis that other incoming ideas were also absorbed cannot be denied. It is in this perspective the advent of Sundaranātha from Kēdāra and Nēpāla to Tamil land, should be viewed.

The Nātha Cult

There was a popular sect in northern India, called the *Nātha* sect, in the medieval period. The followers of *Nātha* school were votaries of Śiva and Śakti with a strong bias towards *Sākta* tradition. The origin and development of this sect is not very clear. The following account of the sect in a recent work is worth noting. "On the esoteric cults of Mediaeval India *Nāthism* is important. It is heterodox in character and its followers are still found in different parts of Northern and North eastern India. Once it was also popular in some parts of Maharashtra. Modern Nathism of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Nepal and Bihar, has been mixed with the principal existing religions of the said regions, while in Bengal and Assam, the *Natha Yogis* want to preserve their seperate identity. The origin of *Nathism* is covered in mystery. Fragments of mediaeval *Natha* literature are preserved in Bengali language, a critical examination of which must show that Nathism was originally a primitive Mother Goddess cult that came into India, from outside.

However judging by the north Indian regional literature on the *Nātha yogis* and the variety of myths and legends connected with them, it would seem that the *Nātha* movement in its developed form was a north Indian one and that it was amalgamated with the *Śakti* cult. Their religious discipline was that of *haṭayoga,* which was an article of faith with them. Their objective was to attain the state of *Jivan mukti* or immortality in life, through the process of *Ulṭa sādhana*, that is by making the semen flow upwards instead of downwards and the *kāya sādhana* that is, by disciplining of physical body they believed that the imperfect body could be transformed into perfect and then into divine which was the only way to overcome decay and death. The right and left nerve channels were designated as the sun and the moon, the former standing for fire or heat and the later for *Somarasa*, the nectar essance. The sun was identified with Śakti or the female and the moon with Śiva or Male".[1]

"One of the founders of the *Nātha* cult which in essence was a form of Tantrism, was called Goraksha, the cowherd."[2]

Tirumūlar—a Follower of Nāthism

The fact that Sekkilār mentions Kedāra and Nepāla as places from where Sundaranātha came to Tamil land shows that those places were held in high esteem by the followers of Sundaranātha. That Tirumūlar, the author of *Tirumandiram* was said to have been a cowherd, very closely resemble the *Nātha* tradition. Tirumūlar himself is called Tirumūlanātha. In the prologue of *Tirumandirām*, Tirumūlar himself says that he got the name *Nātha* by the grace of Nandi—*Nandi Arulāle Nāthanām Peyar Perrom.*[3]

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1. "History of Sakta religion" by N.N. Bhattacharya, 1974, P. 129-30.
2. "Lokayata" by Devi Prasad Cathopadhyaya—pa.
3. Tirumandiram. v. 68.

நந்தி அருளாலே நாதனும் பேர்பெற்றோம்.

(வரிகள் : 68).

That *Tirumandiram* extols the greatness Śakti is evident in the fourth *Tantra* which is almost exclusively *Sākta* in its outlook. That Tirumūlar himself states that he adored Śakti[1] :

புவனாபதியாம் அருந்தவச் செல்வியை
சேவித்து அடியேன் பரிந்துடன் வந்தனன்.

(வரிகள் : 75).

Bhuvanāpathiyām Aruntavac celviyai sevittu aḍiyen Parindu uḍan Vantanam.

Tirumandiram emphasises *yoga*, particularly the raising of *Kuṇḍalini* through *Iḍā* and *Pingalā*.

In this connection another aspect also deserves special mention. Though the Nāthas were *Tantric* followers they never advocated the Vāmācāra namely *Pancha makāras* and the *latā sādhana* of the *Śāktas.* "The *Nātha* sect never indulged in this type of Śakti worship (*Vāmācāra*)".[2] Though *Tirumandiram* speaks so much of *Śākta* and *Bhairava* cults it does not advocate the *Vāmācāra.* It would be clear that a close resemblence exists between the *Nātha* school and *Tirumandiram* and that considerable ideas of the sect have permeated and is reflected in legends and thoughts of Tirumūlar.

Tamil and Sanskrit

Tirumūlar gives many important facts about the text, teachers and schools to which he belongs. He refers to twenty-eight Śaiva *āgamas* and also records the tradition that the *āgamas* were taught by Śiva to Uma.[3] He asserts that Śiva taught *āgamas* both in the Tamil and in Sanskrit languages—*Āriyamum Tamiḷum uḍane solli Kārikaiyārku karuṇai cheytāne.*

ஆரியமும் தமிழும் உடனே சொல்லி
காரிகையாருக்கு கருணை செய்தானே.

(வரிகள் : 65).

also in—*Tamiḷccol Vaḍacol ennum ivviraṇḍum Uṇarthum Avanai uṇarthalum āme*[4].

From among the twenty-eight *āgamas*, Tirumūlar has drawn from nine *āgamas* which he mentions as *Kāraṇa, Kāmika, Vīra, Chinta, Vātula, Yāmaḷa, Kālōttara, Suprabheda* and *Makuṭa.*[5]

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[1] Tirumandiram, v. 75.
[2] "Sakti cult in Ancient India" by Pushpendra Kumār, Varanasi, 1974, P. 164.
[3] Tirumandiram, v. 165.
[4] *Ibid.*, v. 66.
[5] *Ibid.*, v. 63.

The School

In his *Guruparamparā*, Mūlan says that there were originally four disciples of Nātha viz. Sivayogamuni, Patañjali, Vyāgrama and Tirumūlan. They are said to belong to the Nandi group. It is not known whether there was any sub-sect among the *Nātha* school called the Nandi group. Tirumūlar says that the four obtained the name *Nātha* by the grace of Nandi.[1] (It is of interest to mention that among the Jains, there was a *gaṇa* called *Nandi-sangha.*) Among the Śaivaites, the Nandi lineage (*Paramparā*) was very powerful, Tirumūlar had seven disciples Matangan, Indran, Soman, Brahman, Rudran, Kanturu, Kālāngi and Kanchamalaiyān.[2] Four of his disciples went to the four directions[3] carrying his message. In all probability Mūlan and his disciples assumed the title *Deva or Natha* and were probably called, Mālānganātha, Indranātha, Somanātha, Brahmanātha and so on.

Śakta Cult

Mūlan says[4] that by the grace of Lord, he is composing this *Āgama*. Thus it is evident that this is an *Āgama* composed in Tamil, based mainly on the nine *āgamas* mentioned earlier. The inclusion of *Yāmaḷa* and *Kālottara*, would suggest that Mūlan drew also from *Śākta Tantras*, which is reflected to a very great extent in the text. In fact Mūlan says that he adored the lotus feet of that great Goddess of Penance Bhuvanāpati.[5] He further says that he has come to expound the cosmic dance of the Dēvi who is (*Sacchidānanda svarūpi*), *Niratisayānanda svarūpi*, and who is said to have removed his cycle of birth.

The Nine Tantras

Of the nine sections called *Tantras*, the first *Tantra* deals with *upadesa*, the transitory nature of wealth and the physical body, etc., the greatness of non-violence, refraining from drinking intoxicants, etc.; the second gives the esoteric meanings of some of the manifestations of Śiva, such as *Ashṭa Vīraṭṭa*, *Lingapurāna*, *Panchakritya*, etc.; the third with *Ashṭānga Yoga* and *Ashtasiddhi*; fourth with *Ambala Chakra*, *Bhairavī Mantram*, etc.; the *Caryā*, *Kriyā*, *yoga* and *Jñāna* are dealt with in the fifth, while in the sixth *Tapōvesha*, *Jñānavesha*, *Guru Darśana* are dealt with; the seventh has the six *Ādhāras*, *Sivapūja*, *Gurupūja*, etc., as its topic. The removal of desires, greatness of *Bhakti* etc., are dealt with in 8th, while in the last, are detailed *Panchākshara* and *Śiva darśana*.

An Original Contribution

It may be seen, from the above that the *Tirumandiram* does not follow the four fold division of the *āgamas* as *Caryākāṇḍa*, *Kriyākāṇḍa*, *Yogakāṇḍa* and

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[1] **Tirumandiram, v. 68.**

[2] ***Ibid.*, v. 69.**

[3] ***Ibid.*, v. 70.**

[4] ***Ibid.*, v. 73.**

[5] ***Ibid.*, v. 75.**

Jñānakāṇḍa. Nor does it deal with the process of installation, etc., which are elaborately dealt with in the *Āgamas*. It does refer to various forms of fire offerings, the construction of altars (*Kuṇḍas*) etc., but in every case it emphasises the esoteric significance and in that sense is an original contribution. As it has drawn from various texts of *Āgamas*, its massage is not unitary in character, but has paths prescribed for various followers. But it does emphasise to a very great extent the *yogic* path of raising *Kuṇḍalini Śakti* to *sahasrāra*. This is essentially *Yoga-Jñānamārga* and is not the *Bakti* cult in the ordinary sense.

The descriprion of Śakti's *kuṇḍās*, *mantras*, *yantrās*, and their *bijāksharas* as given in this text are so remarkable, one would immediately treat this as a *Sākta* text *per excellance*, in Tamil.

The text in its elaborate descriptions, does not mention the *Pancha makāras*, and *latā sādhana* which shows that it is the Dakshina school. In fact Tirumūlar, decries the taking of intoxicants and meat. There is no reference to *matsya* at all. Though *maithuna* is refered to, it is always in its esoteric sense. This shows that here is a *Śākta* school, having all the aspects of the other *Śākta* schools but without the *Vāmamārga*.

We list below the names of Parāśakti as mentioned in this text to show the *Sākta* traditions :

Ādi Bhairavi
Agocari
Abhirāmi
Ashṭa Śakti
Ānandamohini
Antari
Kanyā
Kriyāsakti
Karani
Karīshani
Jnānasakti
Tripura Bhairavi
Tatvanāyaki
Tripurasundari
Suddhā
Suhodayā
Sindhuraparipurā
Sāmbavi
Yogini
Caṇḍikā
Sūlini
Sukhaparasundari
Māmāya
Māyā
Mohini
Manonmani
Māsakti
Nārani
Nisācari
Nīli
Navasakti
Vairavi
Varāhamukhi
Vaikharī
Vaindhavi
Parābindu
Parāsakti
Parāvidyā and
Omkāri.

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Vāmācāra Condemned

Tirumūlar strongly denounces the eating of meat, drinks, lust, licing, murder, etc.[1] Obviously in this text, *madhu* and *māmsa* were not approved. Mūlar also strongly condemns cohabitation with others wife.[2] He also denounces those who advocates sexual union as a source of emancipation. Mūlar advocates Vedic *yagñas* of *saumya* order and at the same time recommends, like the Vedantins, the discarding of *Karma* and *Niyama*.

Tirumūlar also squarely condemns *Vāmāchāra*. The *Vāmins* are said to waste their life in drinking liquor and sexual indulgence. He also refers to those who drink intoxicants, to attain Śakti.[3]

Fourth Tantra—A Sākta Section

The fourth *Tantra* of *Tirumandiram* is the most important and is considered the central teaching of the whole text. It carries 535 verses in thirteen chapters viz.,

1. *Ajapā*
2. *Tiru Ambala Cakra*
3. *Arcchana*
4. *Tripurā Cakra*
5. *Navakuṇḍa*
6. *Bhairavi mantra*
7. *Pūrna Śakti*
8. *Ādhāra Ādhēya*
9. *Eroli Cakra*
10. *Bhairava Cakra*
11. *Sāmbavi maṇḍala Cakra*
12. *Bhuvanāpati Cakra*, and
13. *Navākshari Cakra*.

Barring the first four chapters, in all the others, the various aspects of *Śākta Tantra* namely the *mantra*, *yantra*, *upāsana*, *māyā*, its various forms and the ultimate, supremacy of Śakti are detailed. A careful study of this portion would reveal that this part is a comprehensive treatise on *Tantra Sāstrā* of the *Sāktas*. Here Śakti is conceived as the Supreme Goddess (*Parā devatā*). The *cakra* in the human body, the *Kuṇḍalinī śakti*, the mode of awakening her, the various *yantras*, syllables connected with the appropriate *mantras*, the *nyāsas*, the *mudras*, etc., are discussed in such detail that we begin to feel that we are dealing with a purely *Sākta Tāntra* in excellant Tamil.

That the *cakras* (mystic-diagrams) play a vital role in the Śakta cult is well-known. In the fourth *Tantra* alone, as many as seven *chakras* are discussed in different chapters under the heading :

Tiru Ambala Cakram, Tripurā Cakra, Eroli Cakra, Sāmbhavī maṇḍala Cakra, Bhairava Cakra, Bhuvanapati Cakra and Navāksharī Cakra.

Besides the above *Bhairavī mantra*, *Pūrṇa Śakti* and *Ādhāra Ādheya* also emphasise the *Sākta cult*.

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[1] Tirumandiram, I. 199.
[2] *Ibid.*, I. 201.
[3] *Ibid.*, I. 332.

Tripurā Cakra

The Dēvi is called Tripurā since she is the presiding deity of the *cakra* of three kandas. *Mahāmāyā, Suddhamāyā, Kuṭilā, Bindu* and *Kundalī* are synonyms. *Asuddhamāyā* is also called *Adhomāyā* or *Mohinīmāyā*. *Praṇava* is the body and grace of Tripurā. The six mantras *Namaḥ, Vashaṭ, Vaushaṭ, Swāhā, Swadhā* and *Humpaṭ* are the effects of *Praṇava*. Tripurā is *Mahāmāyā, Māya, Vaindavā, Vaikarī, Praṇava*, the *six mantra* and *Jñānasakti*. She is also beyond all these.[1]

The following are her other forms. Tripurā, Sundari, Antarī, Paripurā, Nārani, Dēvi of varied colours, Īsī and Manōnmanī. Assuming various forms appropriate to the Gods, Tripurā bestows grace. Tripurā assumes three forms suited to the three worlds. She bestows knowledge, enjoyment and Liberation *jnāna, bhōga* and *mōksha* as Saraswatī, Lakshmi and Śivā. She is white, red and golden in colour and combines in one form all the three aspects.[2] (That the Parāsakti combines in herself the aspect of Durgā, Lakshmi and Saraswati is wellknown).

Tripurā bestows *Nāda* and *Nādānta*; She creates the universe as *Parābindu*; as Parā, Abhirāmi and Agocari, she bestows grace and *Jñāna*.[3] The Dēvi wears anklets (*nūpura*) on her legs, red silk as garment and *Kuṇḍala* in her ears. Her breasts are covered by a breast band. As Parāsakti holds sugarcane bow, flower arrows, *ankuśa* and *pāśa* (This is generally considered the iconographic description of Rājarājeśvarī), wears *kaṇḍika* as a *hāra* around her neck, a *jaṭāmakuṭa* with the crescent moon. Her eyes (obviously ball-like) are topped by brows resembling a curved bow. She is also called Caṇḍikā, with heavy breasts, She is Māyā, Umā, Śakti, Māparā and Anōraṇī. There is no god who doesn't adore her, and She is the ultimate penance of all. Brahmā, Vishnu, Rudra, Mahēśa and Sadāśiva cannot function without her. She is *Iccā, Jñāna, Kriyā* and *Ānanda Śaktis*. Wherever there is Śiva, there she resides as Mahādēvi. She is also *Dharā Śakti* (obvious identification with Vasundhara). As Parāśakti she has in her half, *Bhogasakti*. She is also the deity of *Vidyā* (Srī Vidyā).[4] She has ten faces (the 8 directions and the upper and lower regions). She is Manonmaṇī Mangali and the goddess of dance.[5]

There is an interesting manifestation often refered to in this text. The Ardhanāri form of Śiva, assumes a puzzling posture, when the Supreme principle is conceived of as Dēvi; Ardhanāri, has one half male and the other half as female. But when the whole is considered a femenine principle, the *Śaktas* speak of the form as a female uniting with a female. This concept is repeated in *Tirumandiram*. The Dēvi who stands united with the Umādēvi, will bestow *moksha*.[6] The supreme realisation is called *Śīvagati* and

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1. Tirumandiram, IV. 1045.
2. *Ibid.*, IV. 1047.
3. *Ibid.*, IV. 1048.
4. *Ibid.*, IV. 1059.
5. *Ibid.*, IV. 1061.
6. *Ibid.*, IV. 1063.

that is bestowed by *Śakti* who is also called Ānandasundari. Parāsakti is the body and soul of Śiva (some take it that she is the body and soul of individual self). She bears manuscript on her hand (an obvious identification with Sarasvati). In this aspect she is Manonmani. She has three eyes, and is white in colour. Her seat is white lotus. She is fond of singing *Tirumarai*, meaning Vedas.[1]

She is Rājarājesvari, weilding *pāśa*, *ankuśa* and sugarcane bow.[2] She bears *Varāha mukha* and pestle and plough in her hand.[3]

The Dēvi, who is the embodiment of *praṇava*, is green in colour; She creates Brahmā, Vishnu, Śiva, Īśa and Sadāsiva and resides in the sound *Hrīm*.[4] She is the *Tatparā*, the Supreme being.[5]

Thus in the chapter on *Tripurā cakra*, Tripura Bhairavi is considered the Parāsakti, the primordeal Being who creates this universe, and is the creator of the five Lords Brahma, Vishnu, Śiva, Īsa and Sadāśiva. She is Mahālakshmi, Mahāsarasvati, and Mahādevi in one form. Hers are *Icchā*, *Jñāna*, *Kriyā* and *Ānanda Śakti*. She is the embodiment of *Srīvidya*. She is Rājarājesvari, Vārāhi and Chāmuṇḍa. The identification of this Tripurā with Cāmuṇḍa having curving eyebrows, manifesting anger, and hairs moving up like the flames of fire is clearly the *Tantric Bhāvana*. Her identification with Varāhi, holding pestle and plough is also a point worthy of note. She manifests as the sixteen *Kalas* and is the ultimate Supreme taught by Vedas and other sacred texts. She is also the ultimate support, *Ādhāra* of the realised souls. She is *Nāda* as well as *Nādānta*. If the name of Parāsakti is medidated in the lotus seat of heart, the illuminating light will begin to brighten the soul.

Thus this whole chapter is in praise of Tripura-Bhairavī cult.

Bhairavī Mantra

The sixth chapter is captioned *Bhairavī mantra*, which deals with Supreme Bhairavi, Her manifestations as Manonmani, Kāli and Nārāyani, the path of internal medidation, *antaryāga*, the process of controlling breath, the *nyāsas* to be adopted and the *mudras* (the signs of hands) to be shown and her different manifestations are detailed in fifty verses.

Kāli—She wears *śūla*, *kapāla*, *nāgapāśa* and *ankuśa* in her arms and is a part of Śiva (On this description She is Kāli). The Dēvi, red like Agni in colour, wears Sūrya and Candra as her eyes and *Kuṇḍala* earrings.[6]

Nārāyani—As Nārāyani she carries *sankha* and *cakra* in her hands and wears *silambu* in her legs.

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1. Tirumandiram, IV. 1066-67.
2. *Ibid.*, IV. 1068.
3. *Ibid.*, IV. 1072.
4. *Ibid.*, IV. 1073.
5. *Ibid.*, IV. 1074.
6. *Ibid.*, IV. 1083.

The Dēvi as Mahāsakti, manifests in the heart of the devotee as the beginning, middle and end of life. The heart of the devotee is equated to lotus in many verses. But in one verse it is conceived as a *kalaśa*. She is adored by the eight *kanyas* and sixty four women (*Yoginis*). To the worshippers of Tripurā with *Tripurāmantra* she manifests as Dakshināmūrthi, the teacher of knowledge[1]. Manifesting as a resplendent light like a full moon, She adopts the Vedic path and bestows grace. The *Śūla* offers protection to the Souls when the individual meditates on her in his *hṛdaya kamala*. She appears in breath, inhalation, exhalation and vitariha *Puraka*, *rēcaka* and *praṇa* as Nārāyani which is the end of Vedas and Vedantas[2].

This chapter also deals with the worshipping Śakti through the process of meditation which is called *antaryāga* of the eight fold yogic *ashṭāngayōga* path.[3] After giving the process of *Karanyāsa* it deals with the meditation of the nine *Śaktis*, beginning with Vāma and ending with Manonmani, each mediated in their respective vital centres *ādhāra sthānas*, the last one being adored at the head in the *dvādasānta*.[4] In this process the Dēvī like a creeper emanates from the *mūlādhāra* centre, like an illuminating light and slowly reaches the *sahasrāra* centre also called *matimaṇḍala* and returns with the nectar[5]. In this aspect she resembles the great fire emanating from the sacrificial altar.

The chapter also deals with *anganyāsa* (assigning the various limbs of body with the mantras). *Sikhā*, *Kavaca* and *Astra mantras* are to be recited while doing the *anganyāsa* and the Supreme is invoked with various hand signs, like *netra*, *sūla* and *yoni mudras*.

The triple *gunas* (*satva*, *rājas* and *tamas*) of the devotees are subdued and Dēvi bestows grace as Bhairavi, Nīlī and Nisācarī.

After dealing this process of *antaryāga*, Thirumūlar enters into the realm of poetic ecstacy, the thrill of joy, he himself has experienced. He says the Vedas, the world of sentient and non-sentient beings, the five elements and the four directions are all nothing but the manifestation of this Universal Energy, who is the light of lights and the illuminating power of the individual.[6] She is the body and soul of Īsa as Ādi Bhairavi.[7] She is the most beautiful embodiment of the very ambrosia, *Amrtānandasundari*, who has created the sun, moon and fire.[8] She resides in the heart of those who are capable of listening to the divine sound of the anklet. She is also called the Goddess Kumāri, as Kanyā (the Goddess of the southern extreme).

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1. Tirumandiram, IV. 1079.
2. *Ibid.*, IV. 1088.
3. *Ibid.*, IV. 1090.
4. *Ibid.*, IV. 1090.
5. *Ibid.*, IV. 1091.
6. *Ibid.*, IV. 1098.
7. *Ibid.*, IV. 1099.
8. *Ibid.*, IV. 1102.

Pūrna Śakti

The seventh chapter of the fourth Tantra is captioned *Pūrna Śakti*, the comprehensive energy, the Dēvi in her full aspect. She protects the soul in times of suffering while Śiva in times of pleasure. Śiva and Śakti are the real parents of the universe. As Yoga Śakti, Devi will help the individual to cross the māyā alias *bindu* and *Nāda*. She is *Yoga Śakti*, as the resplendent *pītha*, facing South, like Dakshinamūrti. She resides as Yoga Śakti in the middle of naval.[1]

Thirumūlar says the Dēvi is Srīvidyā. Sri Cakra consists of nine triangles. When the Vedic mantra, *Rudram* is recited, She manifests herself with three eyes and holding *gada* and *abhaya mudra* (*Rudra yāmala*). It is interesting to mention here that the temple of Kāmākshi at Kanchipuram is called *Nābhi sthāna* and a *pīṭha* has been installed in the *antarāla* as *yōnīpiṭha*. In the centre of the *pīṭha* which is in the form of *Yoni*, there is Sri Cakra drawn. The worship in the temple is performed, according to Vedic tradition (not Āgamic tradition). It only suggests the prominent role of *Rudram* as mentioned in this text.

The *Vaihkarī vāk* emanates as *nāda* from *bindu* and rising as an illuminating light reaches the tongue. The centre between the eyebrows is the place where the Śakti manifests herself as pure knowledge and in the further regions as pure experience. By medidating upon her as a Bālā, a young girl, one would himself become a youth. In another interesting statement the text, says one would become a Dēvi himself by medidating upon her. This is again the highest concept of the Sāktas.

The Paraśiva does the *panca kritya* act, in association with *Iccā*, *Kriyā* and *Jnāna* śaktis. Śiva and Śakti are united as flower and its fragrance, Śakti manifests as the syllables, beginning with '*A*' and ending with '*ksha*'. Those who visualise the Lord in *Matimaṇḍala* are Haṭayōgins. The Śakti resides in 224 *Bhuvanas*. The world is protected by Navasakti. The Dēvi in association with Śiva teaches supreme knowledge. Parāsakti appears as *Virāṭ svarūpi*, wearing silk and skin, traverses the universe with her feet. She wears Candra, Sūrya and Agni as ornaments.

In this chapter we have an interesting reference. The Dēvi is said to delight in sexual union. Her liking for *maithuna* is pointedly mentioned in its esoteric sense, which is important to show, that though the echoes of Vāmācāra are seen yet it is the sublime Dakshinācāra that doiminates the work.

இன்பக்கலவி இனிதுறை தையள்[2]
Inbak Kalavi Inidurai Taiyal.

Ādhāra Āḍheya

The eighth chapter deals with the container and the content. Śakti is the Ādhāra of Śiva. For the happiness of the world Śiva lived as Bhogadeva united with the Śakti.

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1. Tirumandirum, IV. 1112.
2. *Ibid.*, IV. 1127.

(Tantra is a *Bhoga mārga*). The place where Śakti as Kanyā manifests herself is red in colour. She resides in the head (*Śiras*) with sixteen *kalas*. Śakti is adored by Yāmala[1] Āgama. Before the creation of this universe, Śakti remained united with Śiva as Parāśakti. Śakti and Śiva resemble sexual union and its delight. Yoga Śakti is represented in *pīṭha*, and faces south (as Dakshināmūrti). Yoga Śakti is in the middle of the naval (*Nābhi*) and has her feet in the North.[2] She is in the form of *Srī Vidya Sri Cakra* which consists of nine triangles. When the Rudra hymn is uttered she manifests herself with three eyes, *gada* and *abhaya mudra*. *Vaikarīvāk*, emanates as *nāde* from *bindu*, and rising as a resplendent light, comes through the tongue. From *Mūlādhāra to Visuddhi sthāna*, Śakti manifests herself as knowledge (*jnāna*), and above that as experience. Those who meditate upon Dēvi, become Dēvi themselves. One will attain *Samādhi* when meditating on undivided Śiva and Śakti. Śiva's enjoyment with Śakti is *Māyā*. The virgin remained united with her lover. (கலந்து நின்றாள் கன்னி தன் காதலனோடு) Śiva is the support of Śakti and Śakti is the support of Śiva. They remain as *āḍhāra* and *ādheya* to each other.

Eroli Cakra

The next chapter deals with the *cakra* in the form of resplendent light moving upwards. The letters '*a*', '*u*' and '*ma*' (of *Aum*). *Nāda* and *Bindu*, and '*Si*' are *Sivākshara*s. 'Vā' is *Śakti akshara*. The 16 letters '*a*' to '*ah*' and the two letters '*ha*' and '*ksha*' making a total of 18, reside in the *Visuddhi* and *Ājnā cakras*. Śiva passing these cakras and residing in *candramaṇḍala* is the *kāladevata*. He himself manifests as 360 days, *Pakshas*, *Ṛtus*, months and days. The twelve rāsis are divided into 3 parts. Taurus, leo, gemini and capricorn form *Mesha Vīthi*, Pices; Aries, Virgo and Libra, form *Rshba vīthī*, Sagittaurus and Scarpio form the gemini path. One should medidate on the six *ādhāras* and the twelve *rāsis*. This is called *Rāsi cakra*. By the energy of Śakti, the five elements appeared as light. They mingled into one great illumination. From these emanated the universe. The soul reside in this universe. The world is the effect of *Bindu*.

When *Bindu* and *Nāda* coalesce, in equal proportion, they form the seed of this material universe. When the proportion of the *Bindu* is reduced and *Nāda* increased to eight times, it is *mantra bīja*. Two *mantra bījas* appear from *Nāda*. When *Bīja* and *Nāda* join, *bīja* enlarges into *bindu*. *Bindu* is the cause of all things. It is the energy of the lotus feet of the Lord.

The words *Bindu* and *Nāda* constitute the *cakra*. There is no use of mearly uttering the mantras and drawing the diagram. The result can be obtained by medidating upon *pranava* in the inner soul. The *mantra* arising from the cakra, enlarges into *Dambana*, *Mōhana*, *Uccāṭaṇa*, *Vidvēshana*, *Mārana* and *Vasya*. The *Eroli cakra* and its mantra if used for (*Kāmya*) material desires will not be effective.

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1. Tirumandiram, IV. 1169.
2. *Ibid.*, IV. 1172,

Bhairava Cakra

The next chapter is captioned *Bhairava cakra.* It is a short chapter, dealing with the greatness of Ādi Bhairava, and His cakra, the worship of which would destroy the opponents. Most of the commentators take the opponents as real enemies of the individual and suggest that this is intended for those who want to destroy their enemies. It is also possible to interpret this chapter in its esoteric sense in confirmity with the general tune of this text. The enemies referred to are one's own senses which are the obstacles to the realisation of the Supreme. This chapter is also interesting from another angle. It gives the iconographic description of Ādi Bhairava as having six hands and holds Sūla, Kapāla, Damaruka, pāsa, head and sword. He is red in colour. Those desiring victory over enemies, should worship *Bhairava* with liquor, *Madhu* and *Sāndhu, Jawādu* and *Punugu nei* (ghee). The cakra consists of six and six—36 squares. The dead body of the opponents can be tossed up as a ball when Bairava drinks the life of the opponent. It is interesting to see that Bhairava is given a prominent position in this section. Secondly his invocation is intimately connected with war. Thirdly the offer of *madhu* (liquor) is also advocated, though probably in its finer sense as honey.

Sāmbhavi Maṇḍali Cakra

Another short chapter details the drawing of the *cakra* and the adoration of Sāmbhavi. The *cakra* consists of 8×8=64 squares in which four lingas are drawn. The five sacred letters *Pancāksharas* are medidated upon. Any one can mediate upon this *Sāmbhavi cakra* and *Pancākshara,* a universal approach, without caste, creed or sex). It may be mentioned that the worshippers of the Dēvi are said to take *Sāmbavi Dīkshā,* in other works. Another point of interest is that this cakra is called *Nāḍari Maṇḍala,* is well known to the people. Since all people could worship this aspect, this cakra seems to be called popular Maṇḍala. Everything in the universe, the object we see, the God we adore, the temple we revere, the body, feelings, sleep etc. are all the same Śakti. The Dēvi is also called Kāmukā. (It is of interest to mention that the Amman shrines in Tamil Nad are called *Kamakōṭṭam*).

Bhuvanāpati Cakra

The five letters from '*ka*' are golden in colour. The six letters from '*ha*' are red in colour. The four letters from '*ca*' are pure white in colour. The Parāśakti (the *anga* of Isā) manifests as eight Śaktis, as Parāśakti, Ādi Śakti, Bindu Śakti, Manonmaṇi, Maheśvari, Umā, Lakshmi and Saraswati. These eight forms of Śakti, following the eight yogas, unite with Nādānta. The form of *Yantra* is then detailed. This *Yantra* was probably held superior to others and was called *Yantra rāja* the emperor among mystical diagrams.

The invocation, establishing the vital breadth and meditation, *Āvāhana, Prāna pratishṭā* and *dhyāna* are prescribed in her worship. The Dēvi is said to be red in colour, wearing a red silk. She holds *Ankusa, Pāsa* and *Abhaya* and wears gem set ornaments. She is offered milk and the mantra *Nāradāya Svāha* is uttered in all the four directions. Then *udvāsana* is done and the left over (*sesha*) is partaken.[1]

Navākshari Cakra

The 13th chapter of the fourth Tantra is called *Navākshari* (nine syllables). This chapter may be called a chapter on *mantra Sādhana*. The nine sacred syllables as given in this chapter are '*Chaum*', '*Aum*', '*Haum*', '*Am*', *Krīm*, *Aim*, *Rīm* and *Srīm*. Each of these syllables are said to contain nine syllables, the combination making a total of 81 syllables. By the combination of various syllables, different Saktis are propitiated and their grace attained. The manifestations of these Śaktis, and their *dhyānaslokas* are given in this chapter which is the last of the fourth Tantra (section) in this text. Thus it is essentially a *mantra sādhana*.

Before discussing the text it is pertinent to note what Sir John Woodroffe has to say on the Sākta aspect of the *mantra sādhana*. "A mantra is like everything else, Śakti. Each mantra is the Embodiment of a particular form of consciousness of Śakti. This is the Mantra Śakti. Consciousness of Śakti also exists in the form of the Sādhaka. The object then is to unite these two when thought is not only in the outer husk but is vitalised by will, knowledge and action through its conscious centre in union with that the mantra. The latter is Devata or a particular manifestation of Śakti; and the Sādhaka who identifies himself with the Śakti.

As the Vāmas are Śiva Śakti concentration on them draws the mind towards and then unifies it with the Devata which is one with the Mantra. The Devata of the Mantra, is only the creative Śakti assuming that particular form. As already stated, Devata may be realised in any object not merely in *mantras*, *yantras*, *Ghatas*, *Pratimas* or other ritual objects of worship. The same power which manifests to the ear in the mantra is represented in the lines and curves of the yantra which the *Kulavali Tantra* says, is the body of the Devata.

The Devata is thus the graphic symbol of the Śakti, indicated by the Mantra, with which identification takes place. As in Kundalini yoga so also here the identification of the sādhaka with different mantras gives rise to various Vibhutis or powers; for each grouping of the letters represents a new combination of Matuka Śakti. It is the eternal Śakti who is the life of the Mantra. Therefore siddhi in Mantra Sādhana is the union of the Sādhaka's Śakti with the Mantra Śakti; the identification of the Sādhaka with the Mantra is the identification of the knower, knowing and known or Sādhaka, Mantra and Devata. Then the Mantra works.[2]

What is dealt with in the chapter on *Navākshari cakra* of the Thirumandiram is essentially the same as discussed by Woodroffe above. Thus it is evident, this chapter is truly a Sākta work. Thirumular says that he is describing the circle of Navākshari (nine syllables) each having nine *aksharas* making a total of eighty one and this circle begins.

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1. Sakti and Sakta by Sir. John Woodroffe, P. 509-510.
2. *Ibid.*, P. 511-513.

with '*Klim*' and ends with '*Caum*'. This is clearly a subjective recitation (*ullelum*) which will confer *navāksharī Śakti.* It will bestow knowledge, education and manifest itself as a luminary. The cakra is to be made of silver, gold or copper and should be medidated upon. The Śakti should be worshipped with *sambha* paddy and *arha* grass reciting the mantras beginning with *Srīm* and ending with *Klīm*. She is Dharma devata. Kāmākshi of Kanchi worshipped in Sri cakra is called Dharmadevata. This Dēvi is black and will bestow all auspicious things on earth and conquest of death.

As mentioned earlier the text deals with the worship of various *cakras* and *mantras* and in that sense is a compendium of *Sākta yantrōpāsana*. A second *cakra* is dealt with then in which the mantras beginning with '*Hrīm*' and ending with '*Srīm*' are to be invoked and worshipped by medidation. The worship of this is intended to draw people towards the worshipper. So this may be considered a *Vasīkarana cakra.* This Dēvi is the *Parā*, the Goddess of all the eight quarters.

Another *cakra*, beginning with '*Aim*' and ending with '*Rīm*' will bestow knowledge of *Vedas, Āgamas* and all other desired sciences. This is also considered the knowledge of the cosmic dance. This is recommended for those afflicted with mental agonies as it would remove all such afflictions. The medidation on this *chakra* is also said bestow golden colour to the devotee. Another *chakra* begins with '*Haum*' and ends with '*Krīm*' and the presiding deity is called Sadāsiva Nāyaki, who is Manōnmani. Another chakra is dedicated to *Amudēsvari* and is to be adored with the *bījas* '*Lam*' to '*Ham*'. This *chakra* seems to be devoted to the control of breath (*prāna*). Another *chakra* beginning with '*Sam*' and ending with '*Lam*' is called the cakra of illuminating lamp (*Vilakkoli cakra*). The Dēvi of this cakra is the embodiment of knowledge. She pervades the supreme *ākāsa*, the space and dissolves all that has come into existance. In this *cakra*, Dēvi, the consort of the Lord of 'A' is invoked. She is identified as *Nāvukkarasi* (*Vākdevi*). She is the presiding deity of words and their meanings and knowledge (*Kalvikkarasi*).

The next *cakra* begins with '*Kaum*' and ends with '*Aim*'. In this *cakra*, the Dēvi manifests as the embodiment of *Tattvas* (*Tattvanāyaki*) and will remove lust, anger and the unending evil of karma. She witnessed the dance of the cosmic dancer, and is the Mother of this universe.

The next *cakra* is in praise of Parāsakti[1] as the virgin, dwelling in forest (*Aranyavāsini—Kānattu kanni kalanda parā sakti*). The *bijaksharas* begin with '*Krīm*' and ends in '*Kaum*'. The worship of this deity will bring rain and prosperity.

The next *cakra*, is discussed in detail. Even the method of drawing this *cakra* is given. It is called the *Svāyambu cakra* (self manifesting cakra). It consists of 9×9=81 squares. The circles in this *cakra* are to be gold in colour, the line in yellow colour and the letters in green colour. After drawing this diagram, special oblations should be performed in sacrificial altar with ghee and *Avis*. Nine objects that give fragrance are to be placed; they are sandal, *Kumkumam*, *Kastūri*, red smandal paste, *Javvādu*, *Punugu*, *Paccaikarpūram*, *Gorocanai* and *Pani nīr*.

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[1] Tirumandiram, IV. 1344.

Nine Śaktis

After giving these nine *cakras*, the chapter gives the iconographic description of nine Śaktis and the result that would be obtained by worshipping them. However the name of the individual Śakti's are not given.

The Dēvi has six arms holding *Parasu*, *Sūla*, *Ankusa*, *Pāsa*, bow and arrow. The sacred syllable of this Dēvi is '*Klim*' she is surrounded by 64 *Śaktis* and 64 *kanyas*, carrying bow and arrow in their two arms. This Dēvi is golden in colour and is the embodiment of mercy. The second aspect of Dēvi is that of Sri (Mahālakshmi). She has four hands and in both the upper arms holds lotus and the lower ones are held in *abhaya* and *varada* poses. She wears *Kirīṭa makuta* and on her legs *silambu*. She is surrounded by sixty Śaktis and sixty virgins, *kanyas*. They would be carrying flowers in their hands. The Dēvi of this manifestation is Dhanalakshmi.[1] The third aspect of Dēvi is also four armed holding *pāsa*, *ankusa*, *jnānāmudra* and a parrot. Her syllable is '*Hrīm*'. She is surrounded by fifty six Śaktis and fifty six *kanyas*. This Dēvi helps in cutting asunder the bondage of the individual. The fourth manifestation is that of Saraswati. She is seated on a lotus and holds, *abhaya*, *vyākhyānamudra*, *kundikā* and *akṣhamāla*. She is surrounded by fifty two śaktis and fifty two *kanyas*. Another manifestation of the Dēvi shown with eight arms, holding flower, parrot, pasa, parasu, sword, sheild, bow and arrow, wears a garland of pearls and a breastband of coral beads. The Dēvi green in colour and wearing silken garment, is attended by 48 Śaktis and 48 kanyas who are holding their hands in protective poses. She is to be worshipped as *Prāna Śakti*. Another manifestation is shown with ten faces and twenty arms. The following are the weapons :

1. *Pāsa*
2. *Sūla*
3. *Daṇḍa*
4. *Sudarvāḷ*
5. Fire
6. *Cakra*
7. *Jnānamudra*
8. Spear
9. Arrow
10. *Damaruka*
11. *Ankuśa*
12. Parrot
13. Bow
14. Flower
15. *Pāśa* (*Nāga*)
16. *Paraśu*
17. Sword
18. Shield
19. *Sankha*
20. *Kaṭaka*

She is also seated on a lotus and is surrounded by 44 Śakti and 44 *kanyas*. She seems to be *Siddhidhātri* bestowing *siddhis* like *Animā*. Some aspects of this Dēvi are interesting. She is ten faced and twenty armed. The weapons in her arms are also detailed. She is indeed a unique conception rarely seen in the *silpa sāstras*.

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[1] Tirumandiram, IV. 1379.

The next representation discussed is Sadāsivanāyaki, (Manonmani) with five heads and ten arms, holding bell, *sūla, kapāla, parrot, snake, parasu, sword, ball, flower* and *damaruka*. She is surrounded by 46 śaktis and 46 *kanyas*. She manifests in the *Kāsi cakra*. The medidation of this Dēvi will lead to the realisation of the *Śiva-pancākshara* '*Sivāyanama*'. Another manifestation is called *Amṛtakalā*. She is two armed, holding *amṛta kalasa* in her arm. She is attended by 36 Śaktis and 36 *kanyas*. She seems to be the Mohini and is therefore called *Nārāyanasamā*. The ninth aspect discussed is the *Omkārasvarūpi* two armed, slender like a creaper and the very embodiment of feminine beauty. She is the daughter of Girindra, and is attended by 32 Śaktis and 32 *kanyas*.

Having described these nine *aksharas*, nine *cakras* and Śaktis, the text says that there is nothing that one cannot obtain by adoring this Dēvi. In fact the author extols the greatness of Śiva as a *gṛhasta*, united with Dēvi and the allusions are sufficient enough to show, that all people particularly *grahastas* can obtain the supreme bliss in this path. As discussed in other parts of this work, the worship of Śakti and Śiva, did not emphasise renunciation as a sole path to realisation. Again and again they catagorically assured the householder that the path of realisation is open to him.

A careful analysis of this fourth section of Thirumandiram, clearly shows that it is a full *Tantra sāstra* of the Sākta cult. Various manifestations of the Dēvi are dealt with, including the iconographic features, respective sacred syllables, the mystical diagrams (*cakras*), and even the *homa* associated with it etc. We have also shown that even among the Sākta school, different Śaktis are prescribed for different purposes.

Besides this section, Thirumūlar gives the Sākta concept of six *cakras* in the body, the *nāda* and *bindu* concepts, *Kuṇḍalinī Śakti* remaining as a coiled serpent, the ability to rise this power which will pierce the psychic centres and reach the *sahasrāra*, Parāsakti being the cause of the entire universe etc., in many other verses, which it is needless to discuss in detail. We will cite only a few instances. In the seventh section we have time and again the concept of Śakti figuring. The first appearance caused in the world by Sadāsiva is Śakti. All the forms of the universe are Śakti. All the *gunas* of the world are Śakti. *Bhoga, Moksha, Buddhi, Siddhi*, the total of 36 *tattvas* etc., are also Sadāsiva.[1] (1713-1714).

Brahma, Vishṇu, Rudra, Īsā and the five faced Sadāsiva, Nāda and Bindu, Ādhārasakti and the Parasiva are commonly called Sadāsiva.[2] Śakti is the earth, while Sadāsiva is the universe. Śakti and Śiva constitute the mobile and immobile objects. Śakti is with form and Śiva is formless. Śakti and Śiva constitute the 36 *Tattvas*. Sadāsiva with five heads and ten arms is invoked with five *angamantras*; they are *hrdaya* (heart), *siram* (head), *sikhā* tuft. *Kavaca* (sheath) and *netra* (eye) *mantras*. In each we have the Śakti manifesting in different forms. In *hrdaya mantra* she manifests as Jnānasakti; in Siromantra, she is *Parāsakti*; in sikhā, she is *Ādi Sakti* and in the sheath she is *Iccā* and in *Neṭrā*, she manifests as *kriyā Śakti.*[1] The *Pīṭha* of linga is music and Omkāra[2]. *Bindu* and *Nāda* constitute the Linga in which *Bindu* is the *piṭha* and *Nāda* is the linga. The two united are to be adored as Ādhāra devas.[3] Śakti in the *pīṭha* is *Ātma Śakti;* in the *kaṇṭa* portion is *Vidyā Śakti* and the linga portion is *Sivatattva* and the Śakti that manifests in the whole, is called *Sadāsiva.* The creation of the universe, the individual soul made to go through the experience of *Māyā* and *Kanma* and bestowal of final emancipation are all the sports Śiva and Śakti.

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[1] Tirumandiram, VII· 1713-14.

[2] *Ibid.*, VII· 1731.

The age of the work

The date of this work is essential for the study of Sakta cult in India as such. The traditional accounts that Thirumular lived in 6000 B.C. and that he lived for 3000 years, composing one verse each year are to be left to the realm of myths. The highly advanced concepts of Sākta and Saiva faith expressed in this work; the references to Chidambaram and the coloquial expressions found abundantly in this work are considered by some scholars as a pointer to a late date for this work. We do not think that it is possible to fix the date of this valuable work with any certainity, but rest satisfied with indicating the possibilities.

That the work seems to be earlier than 12th century A.D. appears to be certain, for Sekkilār, the author of the *Periyapurānam,* who adorned the Chola court, refers to the 3000 verses composed by Thirumūlar basides giving his life history. Sekkilār based his work on the *Thirtthondar antāti* by Nambi Aṇḍar Nambi and *Thiruttondatthai* of Sundaramurti. Nambi Āṇḍār Nambi is assigned to the 11th century A.D. He refers to Thirumūlan as a native of Sattanur and belonging to a family of Cowherds. He also says that Mūlan sang the essence of Vedas in pure Tamil.

குடிமன்னு சாத்தனூர்க் கோக்குல மேய்ப்போன் குரம்பு புக்கு
முடிமன்னு கனற் பிறையாளன் தன்னை முழுத்தமிழால்
படிமன்னு வேதத்தின் சொற்படியே பரவிட்டென்றுச்சி
அடிமன்ன வைத்த பிரான் மூலனுகின்ற அங்காளனே.

Nambi Āndār Nambi refers also to the legend that Mūlan entered the body of the Cowherd. This would take the work earlier than 11th century. As has been mentioned above, Nambi Āndār Nambi himself elaborated the list of saints given by Sundaramurti. Sundaramurti, who is assigned to 8th century A.D., refers to Thirumūlan as one of the saints. He does not give any exploits of Thirumūlan nor does he refer to the composition of this work. Some scholars try to argue that there was no doubt a saint, Thirumūlan, but the author of this Thirumandiram must be a later saint, the identity being only in their names. The reasons for this view are the highly developed philosophic contents and terminology. However, it is seen that Nambi Āndār Nambi who elaborated Sundaramurti's work has to the extent possible preserved the legends

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1. Tirumandiram, VII. 1744.
2. *Ibid.*, VII. 1752.
3. *Ibid.*, VII. 1757.

connected with the life of other saints. There is no reason to believe that a different legend is given only with reference to Mūlan, though the possibility of some mixing up in the intervening period cannot be completely ruled out. That would place Mūlan, earlier than 8th century A.D. The great Saivite saints Appar and Sambandar who lived in 7th century A.D. have no reference to Thirumūlan. The absence of reference is though not an argument, for they do not refer to many other saints mentioned by Sundaramurti, yet we may hold that the work of Mulan has not attained sufficient popularity to have attracted their attention. In all probability Mūlan himself wrote his work sometime in 7th century A.D.

This dating would of course give raise to further problems which need an independent enquiry. For example whether the twenty eight Āgamas and their *upāgamas* were well codified before this period ? Whether the *Rudra Yāmala* has developed to the extent found in this text ? Whether Nātha cult to whom we assign Mūlan, has developed in Northern India before the 8th century A.D., to such great heights ? What was the role of Benaras as a centre of Saiva learning before the 8th century A.D. and what was its relation with the Vāma school of Bengal ? Whether in Benaras itself, the Vāma school was squarely denounced as has been done by Thirumūlar ? The constant wave of ideas emanating and spreading towards the south and the impact of the Tamil scholars visiting Benaras and leaving their imprint on the developing ideas there, also deserve a special study.

We would only say that the *Thirumandiram* cannot possibly be dated later than 8th century A.D. and for the study of Tantric cult it is one of the ancient works in the whole of India and needs greater attention than it has received so far.

THIRUPPUGAL

Thiruppugal[1]

One of the greatest figures of late medieaval period (14) who revived the Bhakti movements, by his excellant poems was Arunagirinatha. Arunagiri was a great *bhakta* of Subrahmanya and has composed hundreds of poems on him. His poems are collected and are popularly called *Thiruppugal*. Besides *Thiruppugal*, Arunagiri has composed *Kandar anubhuti* and *Kandar alamkāra*, both one hundred verses each, on Lord Skandha. Besides a number of other poems are also assigned to him. His poem are sung reverentially by millions of devotees to this day. They are in excellent Tamil, with an admixture Sanskrit, and are known for their rhythm and deep meanings.

Life of Arunagiri

Arunagiri belonged to the family of Dindima family which received the patronage of the Vijayanagara rulers in later times. Arunagiri spent the major part of his life at Thiruvannamalai, a place known for its impressive hill and a great spiritual attraction.

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[1] 'Tiruppugal', Saiva Siddhands Samajan, Ed.

The hill was called Arunagiri *i.e.* the red hill. Obviously the saint Arunagirinātha was named after this sacred hill.

According to tradition, saint Arunagirinātha came into conflict with one Sambandān, an influential person in the administration of Thiruvannamalai temple. Sambandāndān, is said to have been a Sākta, a *Kāli upasaka,* who schemed to do away with Arunagirinatha. Having failed in his attempt, he was converted says the tradition.

Arunagirinātha has two biographical references in his poems. In one he refers to a Prauḍadevarāya, a contemporary ruler and in another refers to one Somanāthadeva Matha. This Prauḍadevarāya has been taken to refer to the Vijayanagara ruler Devarāya and Arunagiri is assigned to the 15th century A.D.[1]

Date of Arunagiri

I have discussed the date of Arunagiri in detail elsewhere.[2] An inscription from Thiruvannamalai temple where Arunagiri lived, helps us in fixing the date of Arunagirinātha. The inscription is dated in saka 1262 (A.D. 1340). The then ruler mentioned in the inscription is Hoysala Vīravallāla III. The epigraph refers to a gift of land to some Brahmins by one Sambandāndān, a head of a *matha* at Thiruvannamalai. Among the signatories figure one Somanāthadeva and one Arunagirijiyār. Mention has already been made that Arunagirinātha came into conflict with Sambandāndān at Thiruvannamalai and he also refers to Somanātha. The contemporaneity of all the three persons, Arunagiri, Sambandāndān and Somanātha are established by this epigraph. A certain Arunagiri is said to have been born in A.D. 1300 according to a manuscript. In all probability Arunagiri the author of Thiruppugal was identical with this and lived in the 14th century.

Sākta leanings of Arunagiri

As mentioned earlier, all his poems are in praise of Subrahmanya, but he refers so frequently to various aspects of Śakti, that we are tempted to suggest that he was only following a modified form of Sākta tradition. The suffix *nātha* attached to his name seems to indicate that he belonged to a branch of the *Nātha* cult. It is not known whether this branch of the Nātha cult, had as its main deity, Kumāra Skanda. But Arunagirinātha made it an independent, powerful and at the sametime popular devotional movement in praise of Skanda with a strong base of Sakta tradition. It would therefore be interesting to outline briefly the Sākta cult as reflected in Arunagiri's poems.

The various forms of Śakti are mentioned by Arunagiri while praising Skanda as the child of this universal mother. In most of these instances, well known Sākta

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1. 'History of Tamil Literature', 15th century, Madras, 1969, P. 6-40.
2. *Arunagiri and Annāmalai Inscription* by R. Nagaswamy; S.I.I., Vol. VIII, No. 80, P. 231-233.

names in Sanskrit are used freely. An example would suffice to show this trend.

Dhavalarūpa Sarasvati Indira
Rati Pulōmasa Krittikā Rambhaiyar
Samūha sevita Durgā Bhayankari Bhuvanēsi
Sakalakārani Sakti Paramparī
Himayaparvati Rudri niranjani
Samayanāyaki Nishkali Kundalī Emadāye
Sivai Manonmanī chitsukhā sundari
Gauri Vedavidakshinī Ambikai Tripurai Yāmalai[1]

Devi is praised by her both benign and terrific aspects. She is praised as *Ranabhairavi, Ranatungakāli, Cāmuṇḍi, Piḍāri, Kangāli, Kuṭilayōgini, Sankari, Canḍikai Vīrabhadrakāli* which clearly signify the Sākta traditions in full.

A list of select names of Dēvi, which are reflective of Sakta cult is given below :

Akilānda Nāyaki
Abhirāmi
Ambikā
Āgamasundari
Ādi Ambika
Ranasūli
Onrettu cakradalappen (the Dēvi of Ashṭadala cakra).
Kapāli
Kalyāni
Gauri
Sādhaki
Sāmālakara Paramayogine
Syāmalā
Sivakāmasundari
Sūlini
Tatpara
Tripurā
Nādavaḍivi (Nādarupa)
Kanyā
Kāmakkoṭṭakulamayil
Kāmatantra lila lokini
Kāmi
Kuṭilā
Kuṭilā yōgini
Sankarī
Caṇḍikā
Samaranīli
Nirguna
Bhadrakāli
Bhairavi
Parāpari
Paramayogin
Bhavānī
Manōnmani
Veda Tantri

These names are sufficient to show the height to which the Sākta concepts have permeated the Tamil country in the 14th century A.D.[2]

Sākta Concept

The following attributes of the Dēvi as mentioned in Thiruppugal also deserve notice. The Dēvi is the embodiment of the eight *mūrtas* (the eight elements), and is beyond the comprehension of all the Agamas. She is the embodiment of the six sects (*Shat Samaya*), and the giver of *Kāmasukha*. The individual souls will ultimately merge with the Dēvi. In order to protect the souls she took the form of Vishnu. She is Gayatri beyond verbal description. She floats as a child on waves of ocean (obvious reference to the Vaṭapatrasāyi Vishnu). She is the *Kāma Tantra lila lokini.* She came to Kanchipura on a bull. She resides in *cakradala*; She is praised by Sāmavēda; She is Jnānapūrani and Mantrarūpi; She is the giver of Purānas; She puts under her feet Muyalaka, and takes her residence in cakra (*cakra pracanda sankari*). She is Vārāhi; She studies Vamatantra (*Vamatantra nūl āyvāl*). She gives *Parama Bhoga* to those who drink *Madhupāna*. (*Madhupānam Parukinar Paramapbhōga Mohini*).[1]

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[1] 'Arunagiri and Devi' by S.V. Seturaman, Madras, 1968, P. 337.
[2] *Ibid.*, P. 26-49.

The Dēvi is said to dance as Bhairavi to the left of dancing Śiva (a feature often noticed in sculptural respresentation). She is said to be the Goddess residing in the temple aṭ Smasāna.

It is shown above that all the concepts of the Sakta cult, are fully developed and reflected in Arunagiri's hymns to Skandha. We have shown that by 12th century the Sakta tradition is beginning to emerge in the literature of the period, as reflected in Takkayagapparani and Kalingattupparani. This reaches its height in the 14th century with the advent of Arunagiri, and soon we begin to get hymns and works solely devoted to Dēvi cult. The popularity of Dēvi worship in Śiva temples is in nō small measure to Arunagiri's work.

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1. 'Arunagiri and Devi' by S.V. Seturaman, Madras, 1968, P. 84-95.

IV

TANTRISM IN TAMIL SASTRIC WORKS

JNĀNĀMIRTHAM

Jnānāmirtham,[1] by Vāgīsa Paṇḍita is an interesting work on Saiva cannon, which was in probablity written in the middle of 12th century A.D.

Vāgīsa

Vāgīsa Paṇḍita, who originally was a resident of Kodambakkam, a part of the present Madras city learnt at the feet of a master Paramānanda Muni also called Arulnandi and then went to Thiruvorriyur (now a suburb of Madras) and became an exponent of Saiva doctrine.[2]

In the Śiva temple of Thiruvorriyur, a matha was established by a Caturānana Paṇḍita in the 10th century A.D., which became an important seat of learning. At the instance of one of the Caturāṇana Paṇḍitas, the present structure of the temple was rebuilt of stone by the Chola Emperor, Rājendra in 11th century.

Vāgisa a Somasiddhantin

An inscription in the Temple dated in the reign of the Chola ruler, Rājādhirāja II (circa A.D. 1175), gives an interesting information. During the Panguni festival in the temple, the emperor himself was present on the sixth day of the festival. The deity Paḍampakka dēva was taken out in procession and stationed under the Mahisa tree. At that time, Áluḍainambi Sripurāna was expounded. Along with the Chola ruler, Chaturānana Paṇḍita and Vāgisa Paṇḍita were present on that occasion. The signators to an endowment recorded in an inscription in the same temple, include Chaturana

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1. 'Jnānāmirtham' with commentory, Ed. Avvai S. Duraiswamy Pillai, Annamalai University, 1954.
2. 'History of Tamil Literature' (Tamil) by M. Arunachalam, 12th Century, Madras, 1973, P. 725.

Paṇḍita and Vāgisa Paṇḍita, the exponent of *Somasiddhanta.*[1] We will discuss Sōmasiddhanta elsewhere, but suffice it to say that this Vāgisa Paṇḍita is held identical with the author of *Jnānāmirtam.*

He is said to have later went to Thiruvaliswaram and became the head of the Gōlaki maṭha. Inscriptions in that temple, refer to his successors as belonging to the *Santāna* of the Jnānāmirtha Ācārya of Golaki maṭha. From the above identification we may conclude that Vagisa was a follower of the *Sōmasiddhānta* school of which he became a great exponent. His tittle Paṇḍita also suggests the same. We, therefore, conclude that this work *Jnānāmirta* is an exposition of the *Sōmasiddhānta* school and not the Saiva Siddhānta school. It is perhaps the reason why this good work has not been included among the 14 Saiva Siddhanta texts. In the succeeding paragraphs we may examine the concept of Śakti according to this text.

Eight Sections

The work has been divided into eight sections by later commentators under the following headings : (1) *Samyak Jnāna*, (2) *Samyak darsana*, (3) *Pāsabandha*, (4) *Dēhāntara*, (5) *Pāsa anādi*, (6) *Pasa cheda*, (7) *Pati Unmai*, and (8) *Pāsa mocana.*

The invocatory verse is dedicated to Śiva as Ardhanāri. Śākti is said to be emerald-green in colour, and is grace incarnate. She is the very abode of dharma *aravoḷ* and her very personality is revealed in her captivating smile.

Ādināyaki

The work also has a verse dedicated to Saraswati, who is described as *Ādināyaki*, the primordial Goddess. She is seated on a white lotus, adored by pairs of Kinnaras, vipras and divine damsels. Her adorers renounced even svargabhoga and other pleasures like *Kama sukha* (eternal desires). She by her illuminating grace, dispels their ignorance and bestows bliss.

It is interesting to see Saraswati being praised as the Primordeal Goddess, *Ādināyaki*, in a Saiva text. We have seen that Mahālakshmi, Mahādēvi and Mahā Sarasvati were considered the manifestations of the same Śakti, in Dēvi bhāgavata. This verse reflects that idea by the term *Ādināyaki.*

In the section on *Patiniscaya*, the greatness of Śiva is enunciated werein he is called the Lord of Sri, Sarasvati and Kāli (*vīrya mādhu*) which again shows the dēvi bhagavata cult of *Mahā Kāli*, *Mahā Sārasvati* and *Mahā Lakshmi.* Three *māyās* namely *Suddhamāyā*, *Asuddhamāyā* and *Prakritimāyā* are recognised. These are also called *Bindu*, *Mohini* and *Man.*

Srishṭi

By the *Sankalpa* of Śakti, inherent in Śiva, the universe comes into being in *Bindu avasthā*. *Suddhamāya* is insentient; *Srishṭi* is of two kinds; *Sankalpa Srishṭi*

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1. 'South Indian Inscriptions', Volume V.

and *karana srishṭi*. Parasiva activates *bindu* by his meare will (*Sankalpa*) and not by any seperate act. This is also given in Paushkara as

शिव संकलपमात्रे बिंदुक्षोभकरो यतः
न व्यापार विशेषेण येन ग्रयं विकृतो भवेत्

Paramasiva in whom the merciful Śakti inheres, is the creator of this universe. He can be visualised only by knowledge. He resides in all perceptible objects but beyond perception. He is beyond forms and is not the direct agent of the five action but does the five acts through his Iccā Śakti. Śiva is *nishkala*, Sadāsiva is *Nishkala sakala* and Mahesvara is *Sakala*. Paramasiva, though creates the entire universe through his Śakti, is unaffected himself, like the sun which makes the lotus flowers to blossom but is unaffected by its action. It is only when the individual soul enters the body and enjoys the pains and pleasures, the *mala* will be removed and it is for this reason the inseperable *eka sakti* of Paramasiva, binds and releases the individual soul by her creation (405).

Śiva Śakti

Śiva Śakti, is unparalleled, self luminary; Omnipresent; by itself unaffected or unchanged, *Nītya*, not covered by any other object. It by itself has no likes or dislikes. This is the *Svarupa lakshana* of this Śakti (406). Śiva Śakti has two aspects *Kriyā* and *Jnāna*, through *Jnāna Śakti* it visualises and activates through *kriya śaktī*.

Mahāmāya is the *upādhāna* cause of the five elements; She unites with the *Bindu* and remains in the *pancakrityas* and is devoid of any other desire; without a beginning, middle or end, remains as illuminating light everywhere; without any binding remains as the very end of all *padārthas* culminating at the *nāda*.

Parasakti

The Parāsakti, in the company of Śiva, enters the *Bindu* alias *Suddhamayā* and by producing the four *vāks* (speeches)—*vaikari*, *Madhyama*, *Baisantī* and *Sūkshma*, actuates the *Bindu* at the time of creation.

Śakti, the aspect of Śiva is one and the same but by its varied functions it is called by various names. *Kriya Śakti*, without seperation from Śiva, though is without action, actuates the universe says the treatises. *Kriya Śakti* is a *Jata*, devoid of knowledge. It is the *Jnāna Śakti* of Śiva, that bestows *bhoga* and *moksha* to the individual soul, through *Kriyā Śakti*.

Śakti nipāta is another important concept of the Saiva school. This is explained in the following way. When suddenly a stone falls in the midst of people, they are shaken and hurriedly resort to safer places, so also at the appropriate time Śiva makes his Śakti fall on the individual soul, who attains the lotus feet of the jnānācharya realising the uselesness of the *samsāra*. By *Śakti nipāta*, the individual soul will get *dīksha*.

THIRUVUNDIYĀR

The Author

The Tamil tradition has grouped fourteen Sastric texts in Tamil as representing the Saiva Siddhānta cannon among which Meikandadeva's *Sivagnānabodham* is considered the basic treatise of this school. Meikanḍadeva is assigned to 13th century A.D. However there are two works written earlier to this period which are also included among the fourteen texts and they are: (1) *Thiruvundiyār*[1] by Thiruvisalur Uyyavanda deva and the (2) *Thirukkalirrupadiyār* by Thirukkadavūr Uyyavandadeva. Recorded tradition assigns the composition of the works to Saka 1070 (A.D. 1148) and to Saka 1100 (A.D. 1178) respectively.[2]

Undiyār

Undiyār ('Thiru' is an auspicious prefix) consisting of 45 verses, in the poetic convention of a sport, recalling the flight of butterflies. The last verse of the composition gives the name of the author as Uyyavantān. It is placed at the head of the fourteen Siddhānta texts. It is so close to the *Thirumandiram* in its exposition and content, we are tempted to hold this as a text, belonging to *Thirumandiram* school, which we have identified with the *Nātha* school of the North. This is equally corroborated by the tradition which state Uyyavantadeva came originally from Northern India and after preaching this doctrine at Thiruvisalur, attained salvation. If Thiruvisalur Uyyavantadeva was realy a northerner (which some scholars dispute) his mastery over Tamil language is remarkable which bespeaks of the missionary zeal of these great saints.

Since this is a short work, the references to Śakti cult are meagre. However, the author refers to Śiva as *Ambikai bhāga*.

The Doctrine

The Lord is *akala* but manifests himself as *sakala* for the benefit of the living beings. The *ashṭānga path*, eight fold path, will lead to liberation[3]. By controlling the *prāna* and changing its directions one gets the ability to realise[4]. By raising *Kundalini* (called the lying old lady) one attains bliss[5]. A gingling sound of anklets, that would be heard will lead to the realisation of the Dancing God[6]. One is led to *nirādhāra* from *ādhāra* by following this path.[7]

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1. Tiruvundiyār—Meikaṇḍa Sāttiram, Published by Dharmapuram Mutt, 1942.
2. "History of Tamil Literature" (Tamil), 12th Century by M. Arunachalam, Madras, 1973, P. 714.
3. Thiruvundiyar, v. 24.
4. *Ibid.*, v. 22.
5. *Ibid.*, v. 14.
6. *Ibid.*, v. 17.
7. *Ibid.*, v. 8.

In addition to the above concepts, *Thiruvundiyār* also refers to two important acts of the *sādhaka*. The first one relates to sexual union *maithuna* (*siṛṛinba*) which itself would lead to great bliss.

> பெற்ற சிற்றின்பமே பேரின்பமாய் அங்கே
> முற்றவரும் பரிசுந்தீ பற.
>
> (வரிகள் : 33)

It also refers to drinking intoxicating liquors.

> மாயக்கள்ளுண்டா ரென்றுந்தீ பற.

However, the author mentions these two forms of observances in their esoteric sense and not in their ordinary sense. In fact, the author says that it is only the fools, who will take to these ordinary or lower course without realising their real estoric meanings; for example drinking does not mean the drinking of licquor but the licquor of knowledge. He calls the followers of lower paths as dry human beings.

Another important aspect, is the reference to the supreme Lord as *Nātha*. The God, the ruler of our souls, is one (*Eka*) and many (*aneka*), who becomes *Nātha*. This reference to *Nātha*, would confirm our view that this work was also influenced by the Nātha tradition. Though we have references to Śakti and its worship, they are not of the *Vāma* but of the *Dakshina* school. However it is clear from this work that the *Vāma* school with an emphasis on *maithuna* and *madhu* was also known to the author who despised the practices.

THIRUKKALIṚṚUPPADIYĀR

The Author

Thirukkaliṛṛuppaḍiyār[1] by Uyyavandadeva of Thirukkaḍavūr, is the second Siddhānta work constituting the 14 works in Tamil. This work is almost an elaboration of *Thiruvundiyār* discussed earlier. The author of this work, Uyyavandadeva, is said to have been a disciple of one Āludaiyadeva who was himself a disciple of the author of *Thiruvundiyār*. The authors of bore the texts *Thiruvundiyār* and its elaboration *Tirukalirruppaḍiyār*, bore the same name Uyyavandadeva, the elder hailing from Thirūvisalūr and the younger from Thirukkaḍavūr. The teachings of the former was transmitted to the later, through a disciple. This tradition is based on one of the verses in *Thirukkaliṛṛuppaḍiyār*[2] (verse 95). The verse specifically states that the author of the *Kalirruppaḍiyār* was inspired by the Sivayōgi of Thiruvisalur. Probably the author of *Kalirruppaḍiyār* was a direct disciple of Thiruvisalur Uyyavandadeva. There is only 30 years between the composition of the first and the second work.

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[1] Tirukkaliṛṛuppaḍiyār—Meikaṇḍa Sattiram, Published by Dharmapuram Mutt, 1942.

[2] *Ibid.*, v. 5.

Whatever it may be, it is significant that the *Untiyār* was elaborated within 30 years by one of the disciples.

The Doctrine

As mentioned earlier, the *Kaliṟṟuppaḍiyār* is only an elaboration of *Untiyār*, its outlook and concepts are identical. The following concepts of this work may be briefly mentioned.

"Śakti and Śiva known as Ammaiappar, are the parents of the Universe. Good *Śivadharma* will lead one to *Śivayoga* which in turn will lead to *Śiva Jñāna* as a result of which the *āṇava* (*ahamkāra*) will be destroyed and Śiva will manifest himself. The five syllables, *Pancākshara*, will help one to realise Ammaiappa (Primordial parents). When external sounds are abandoned internal sounds of the anklet will be heard. The real knowledge is like the seed and the inherent sprout in it. Of all the Yogas nothing is superior to *Śivayoga*. All the other Yogas are only despicable yogas *Avayoga.*[1] For the Yogins, physical pleasures are real great bliss.[2] The Lord activates the universe through Śakti.[3] The Lord is golden in colour, while Ambikā is red in colour. Whatever the colour taken by Śiva, the Lord also assumes the same colour.[4] He unites with his consort and also becomes part of her and stands at the head of all with her and also resides in the *Nādānta* of the consort.[5] I am a devotee of the Nāyaka (Śiva) Nāyaki and Nandi.[6]

The work consisting of 100 verses begins with Ammai (Universal motherhood) and emphasises the universal parantage of Śiva and Śakti. Thus it is essentially a Śaiva doctrine. However, foremost importance is given to Śakti, as Śiva functions only through her.

ŚIVA JÑĀNABODHAM

With the advent of Meykandadeva, the author of *Śiva Jñānabodha*[7] in Tamil, we enter into a grand period of Śaiva doctrines. It is for the first time that Śaiva Siddhānta doctrine is reasoned out in terms of logic, and the existence of the Supreme Being, the individual souls, the bondage their interrelationship and the path of realisation are coherently established in the true sastric discipline. The exposition of Meykandadeva was so brilliant, that all those who succeeded him, refer to him as their *Jñānaguru*, and the Śaiva Siddhānta doctrine itself came to be called *Meykaṇḍa Sāstra*. Meykarda was followed by great exponents of his doctrine, the writings of whom now constitute the Meykaṇḍa Sāstra. All together 14 works have been included in this canon, which includes also the *Thiruvuntiyār* and *Thirukkaliṟṟuppaḍiār* which were composed earlier.

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1. "*Tirukkaliṟṟuppaḍiyār*", *Meikanda Sattiram*,, Published by Dharampuram Mutt, 1042, v. 74.
2. *Ibid.*, v. 76.
3. *Ibid.*, v. 78.
4. *Ibid.*, v. 79.
5. *Ibid.*, v. 80.
6. *Ibid.*, v. 98.
7. *Sivagñānabodom*—Meikanda Sāttiram, Published by Dharmapuram Mutt, 1942.

Meykandār-Life

Meykardadeva was born of a Vellala family at Pennagadam in Tamilnadu and was brought up at his mother's place, Vennainallur and hence came to be called Vennainallur Meykandadeva. A certain Śakalāgama Pandita who was his family *guru*, became his disciple and assumed the name Arulnandi. Meykandar is said to have received intiation at the hands of one Paranjyoti Muni.

An inscription in the Śiva temple at Thiruvannamalai[1], dated in the reign of the Chola ruler, Rajaraja III (1232) refers to a Meykandadeva of Vennainallur who dug a tank, and erected a Śiva temple after his name. Scholars have identified this Meykandadeva with the author of the *Śiva Jnānabodha.*[2]

Śiva Jñānabodham-Tamil

The *Siva Jñānabodha*, consists of twelve *sutras* in Tamil outlining the Śaiva doctrine. There is a *Vṛtti* on these *sutras*, consisting of prose elucidation interspersed with some verses, also in Tamil cited as examples. The citations are in the form of *Kārikas* (*Udahāraṇas*). Thus we have *Sūtras*, *Kārikas* and *Vṛtti*, in the true sastric tradition. According to accepted traditions the *Sūtras*, *Kārikas* and *Vṛttis* were all written by the same author, Meykandadeva.

Śiva Jñānabodham-Sanskrit

There are also available, 12 *sūtras* called *Śiva Jñānabodham,* in sanskrit language. It is held by some that the Tamil work by Meykanḍadeva, was a translation into Tamil, of the Sanskrit work. The Sanskrit work has been commented upon by one Sadaśiva about A.D. 1500. A certain Śiva Jñanaswamy, who commented on Tamil *Siva Jñānabodham*, in 18th century holds that the Tamil *Śiva Jñānabodham* was a translation of the Sanskrit text which forms a part of *Rauravāgama*. However this tradition is discounted by modern traditional scholars, who hold the Tamil work as an original writing for : (1) in the available manuscripts of *Rauravāgama*, these *sutras* are not to be seen, and (2) the *sutras* do not fit in with the general trend of the *Agamas*. As such it is held that the two works are different. It must be admitted that the 12 sanskrit *sūtras*, constituting the *Śiva Jñāna* are crisp, but the Tamil *sūtras* are more pregnant with meaning and concepts. Undoubtedly the Tamil work is the greatest and first work in Tamil, placing Śaiva Siddhanta on a rational footing. Secondly all the subsequent works on the subject are based on the Tamil work only and not on the Sanskrit work. So we are led to conclude, that though the form of expression as *Sūtra, Kārika* and *Vṛtti* is based on Sanskrit tradition, the work is an original contribution in Tamil.

Śakti as Grace

As this is an original and main contribution on the Śaiva doctrine we have to examine the concept of Śakti in this work. Most strikingly we have very little

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1. *S.I.I.*, Volume VIII, No. 74.
2. '*Hitory of Tamil Literature*' (Tamil) by M. Arunachalam, 13th Century Madras, 1970, P. 258.

said of Śakti in this work. The *sūtras* carry no reference at all to Śakti. One of the *kārikas* refer to Śakti as the grace of Lord, Śiva.

> "*Aruḷ uṇḍām Isarku adu Śakti anṛe*" 33

This is the only solitary reference to Śakti in this whole text, though all the later works of the school have treated the role of Śakti elaborately. However, the word *ājñā* in the second *sūtra*, stands for *Chid-Śakti* according to commentators. The word *ājñā* is used both in the sanskrit[1] and Tamil *sūtras*.

> अन्यः सन् व्याप्तितः अनन्यः कर्ता कर्मानुसारतः
> करोति संसृति पुंसां आज्ञया समवेतया

> அவனே தானேயாகி அருவினையில் போக்குவரவு புரிய
> ஆணையில் நீக்கலின்றி நிற்குமன்றே.

Sutra 2

The Lord exists in the universe as its form and life as *Viśvātṁa* and yet remains beyond the universe *Viśvātīta*, and through his Śakti (refered to as *ājña* in the *sūtra*) orders the individual soul to be born and dead according to its own actions, says Pāṇḍipperumal, the earliest commentator on *Śiva Jñāna Sūtra*. The *Kārika* on the same *sūtra* is elucidated by Pāndipperurnal thus; There are three *malas* called *āṇava*, *Māya* and *Karma*. They are beginningless. The Lord is Omniscient. The individual soul possesses only a limited knowledge. The Lord who creates the universe doesn't change.

Chit Śakti

The *Chit Śakti* of the Lord is manifold in nature. In that sense the Lord is spoken of as a Lord of pleasure and office, and becomes the possesser of *Icca*, *Jñāna* and *Kriyā*.

Māya is of two kinds as *suddhamāya* and *asuddhamāya*. They are like the two sides of a mirror. From *suddhamāya*, the following five principles namely *Suddhāvidya*, *Īśvara*, *Sādākhya*, *Śakti* and *Śiva* appear. Also from the same appear, the four *vāks*; *Sūkshma*, *Pasyantī*, *Madhyamā* and *Vaikharī*.

When *Suddhamāya* remains as pure knowledge, it is called Śiva; when it stands as *Kriyā* it is called Śakti; when *Jñāna* and *Kriyā* on equal footing, it is called Sadāśiva. When there is more of *Jñāna* and less of *Kriya* it is called Rudra and when *Kriyā* remains more than *Jñāna* it is called Mahesa. Rudra is also called *Suddha Vidya*.

These five manifestations as Vidyā, Īsvara, Sādākhya, Śakti and Sadāśiva are *Suddha Tattvas* and are considered the independent (*Svatantra*) forms of Śiva.

The words "*induvin māyai āhi*" denotes that *Suddhamāyā* and *Asuddhamāyā* are not two different entities.

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[1] *Sutra* 2.

The entities from *Kalā* to *Prhvī* appear from *asuddhamāyā*.

From *Māyā* emanate, *Kalā*, *niyati*, *kalā*, *Vidyā*, *Rāga* and *Purusha;* along with *Māyā* they are seven in number. From *Kalā* emanate *mūlapṛakriti*. From the *mūlaprakriti*, the three *guṇas*, *Satva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* appear. From this unmanifested *Mūlaprakṛiti* appear *Citta* and *Buddhi*.

The words *Avyakta*, *Mūlaprakiṛti* and *Mahat* are synonyms.

From *Buddhi*, emanates *Ahankāra* and from *ahankāaa jñāna*. From *Ahankāra*, appear *Jñānendriyas* and *Karmēnndriyas*.

The commentator Śiva Jnanayogi, gives the following points of interest on the same *sūtras*. When the Supreme principle remains as pure consciousness, without any reference to external objects it is called Śiva. But when it manifests as an illuminating light, it is called Śakti. The same commentator holds the word *ājñā* as a synonym of *Chit Śakti* of Para Śiva. Thus the word *ājñā* in the *sūtra*, stands for *Chit Śakti* which is considered an inherent *samavāya śakti* of the Supreme.

As mentioned earlier, the *Kārika* on the fifth sūtra, refers to *aruḷ śakti*, merciful energy of the supreme.

அருள் உண்டாம் ஈசற்கு அது சக்தியன்றே
அருளும் அவளன்றி மில்லை - அருளின்
றேலவனன் இல்லை அருள் கண்ணார் கண்ணுக்கு
இரவிபோல் நிற்கும் அரன் எய்ந்து.

In order to remove the individuality (*paśutva*) of the soul, and to bestow *Śivatva*, Śiva bestows grace and that grace is called Śakti. There is no Śiva without grace (Śakti) and there is no grace without Śiva. Śiva doesn't act himself but activates through his Śakti, by mere will force *Sankalpa sṛishṭi*.

It would be interesting to compare the Sākta principle at this stage. "The Sākta Sāstra being a practical Sadhana Sastra, views the matter from our, that is the jiva stand point. To us the universe and ourselves are real. And Īsvara the creator is real. Therefore there is a creation and Śiva as Śakti creates by evolving into the universe and then appearing as all jivas".[1] It would be clear, that the highest philosophical truths, accepted by the Sāktas are not different from those held by Śaiva Siddhantins.

SIVAJÑĀNA SIDDHIYĀR

Arulnandi

Next to *Sivajñānabodham* of Meykandār, the most important work on Śaivasiddhānta is *Śivajñāna Siddhi,*[2] by Arulnandi Sivāchārya. Arulnandi Sivam, was a great scholar in *Āgamas* and was called Sakalāgama Paṇḍitar. He was the family teacher of Meykandār. In fact, Meykandār's father Kalappāḷar held Sakalāgama Panḍita in great veneration. But soon Sakalāgama Paṇḍita recognised the greatness of Meykandār and became his disciple. He is said to have received *Śiva-dīksha* at the hands of Meykandār. This is a noteworthy instance of a Brahmin *Āchārya*, Arulnandi, taking intiation at the hands of Meykandār, a Vellāla (Sūdra). Śaiva siddhāntins have not only preached equality of castes but have shown the way, in their own lives. Arulnandi lived in 13th century.

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[1] "*Śākta and Śakti*" by Sir John. Woodroffe, P. 279.

[2] *Sivagñanasiddhiyar*—Meikanda Sathiram, published by Dharmapuram Mutt, 1942.

Arulnandi Sivam, pays respectful homage to Meykandār in his own works. Two of his works *Sivajñāna Siddhi* and *Irupā Irupadu* have survived. *Sivajñāna Siddhi* is Arulnandi's *magnum opus*. In excellant poetic form, he has elaborated the system of Meykandadeva in over six hundred verses.

Parapaksha and Svapaksha

Sivaijñāna Siddhi is in two parts as *Parapaksha* and *Svapaksha*. In *Parapaksha*, 14 systems of Indian philosophies (*Lokāyata*, *Sautrāntika*, *Yogāchara*, *Mādhyamika*, *Vaibhāshika*, *Nigrandha*, *Ājīvaka*, *Bhaṭṭāchārya*, *Prābhākara*, *Sabda Brahmavāda*, *Māyāvāda*, *Bhaskarīya*, *Nirīsvara sānkhya* and *Pāncarātra*) are examined; their views quoted and rejected on logical grounds. It is an ocean of information on doctrines of various faiths as understood in Tamil land then. However, there is no reference in this to *Vāmāchārins*.

After detailing instruments of knowledge according to the Siddhānta School, the doctrine of Śaiva Siddhānta is expounded in *Svapaksha* in clear terms. It is a brilliant work and is the mainstay of Siddhānta school to this day.

Commentaries

Sivajñāna Siddhi has been commented upon by many scholars from very early times; Maraijñāna Sambandar, Sivāgrayogi, and Sivajnānayogi are the well known commentators on this work. We draw mainly from Sivāgrayogi, whose commentary is not only elaborate but cites innumerable Sanskrit, *Āgamic* and other texts which are valuable for contemporary studies.

Though this work of *Sivajñāna Siddhi* is essentially a Śaiva doctrine, we are discussing it here at some length as it gives elaborately the concept of Śakti in this school. Our studies are confined to the Supreme principle. the manifestation of Śakti in various aspects, the nature of the Sādhakas, the similarities between this school and the Sākta school of the north discussed by Sir John Woodroffe.

Śivajñāna Siddhiyar begins with an invocation to Śiva, in which is condensed the Śaiva Śiddhānta doctrine. According to the commentator, Śiva is invoked in this verse by both, his natural form *Svarūpa* and spiritual essence *Taṭastha lakshaṇas*.

The Great Dancer

"Śiva is limitless light of consciousness and mercy, without a beginning, middle or end. He has in himself Śakti, the Mother of this entire universe, as a part. He is the Lord of the Devas. This Paraśiva, wearing a crescent moon, and with his matted locks of hair whirling around, dances in the space *ambala*. Placing our head on his lotus feet let us remain with infinite love ever growing in us".

According to the commentator Śivagrayogi, Śiva is beyond creation, sustenance and destruction. He is not bound by space or time. He is one pure, all pervading, self effulgent, consciousness and bliss. This is his *Svarūpa lakshaṇa*. In his spiritual essence *Taṭastha*, he is called by three names as *Śakta*, *Udyukta* and *Pravṛitta*. These are distinctions recognised by the manifestation of the Śakti and do not refer to different entities. In order to bestow grace to the individual soul, He becomes Śakta, *i.e.* manifests with *Jñāna Śakti*, which is one of his five Śaktis. So he is called *Jñānamūrti*. The undifferentiated Ādi Śakti of Śiva is the material cause of this universe. Śiva actuates Pure Māyā *Suddhamāya* through his five Śaktis, and in this aspect is called *Udyukta* or *Sadāśiva*. From this aspect the five *Sādākyas* emanate :

1. Śiva Sādākhya
2. Amūrti Sādākhya
3. Mūrti Sādākhya
4. Kartṛ Sādākhya
5. Karma Sādākhya.

These are considered inarticulate forms *Nishkalas*.

From *Bindu* the following five emanate.

1. Īśāna
2. Īśvara
3. Brahma
4. Śiva
5. Sadāśiva

These are called articulate forms *Sakala*.

In *Sakala* and *Nishkala* forms, the gross act is performed by Pure Māyā *Śuddhamāyā*. The Subtle act in *Suddhamāyā* is performed by Śakta. The *pravrtta* aspect is the cosmic dance of Śiva, which is *panca kritya* in *Chit Sabhā*.

Śivaśakti

The second invocatory verse is dedicated to Śivaśakti. In this verse, many aspects of the universal Śakti, through which the creation takes place, is indicated. Śakti is the inseperable, undifferentiated power of Śiva (*samavāya Śakti*). She resides in Parameśvara as heat in fire; But out of boundless mercy, she manifests herself in five forms to perform the five acts (*panca kritya*). The following are her five forms :

1. Parāśakti
2. Ādiśakti
3. Iccā Śakti
4. Jñāna Śakti and
5. Kriyā Śakti.

Śiva Srishṭi

Parāśakti manifests herself as one thousand part of Parameśvara. She bestows grace on ripe individual souls. From Parāśakti, appears Ādi Śakti as one thousand part, and she provides objective pleasures, *vishaya sukha* to individual souls, removes the impurity *Āṇavamala* from them. Iccā Śakti emanates from Ādi Śakti (one thousandth part) as a desire to createt he universe. Jnāna Śakti is the Creator (appearing as one thousandth part of Iccā Śakti), who analyses the actions and the corresponding bodies, senses, worlds, and pleasures for the individual soul. The actual creation, *Sirshṭi.* is performed by Kriyā Śakti, who is one thousandth part of Jnāna Śakti.

This process of the appearance of the five Śaktis, is called *Śivasrisṭi.* These five Siva Sakti's are formless manifestations, *nishkalas* and are distinguished not by their differential nature, but by their actions.

Jñānaśakti acts as the imperceptible and at the same time illuminating knowledge to *Śakta* (We have seen three different manifestations of Paraśiva as *Śakta* (*Udyukta* and *Pravrtta*).

Śakta is inarticulate (*Nishkala*); *Udyukta* is with and without articulation (*Sakala Nishkala*); and *Pṛavritta*, the articulate form (*Sakala*). From the five Śaktis emanates *Udyukta*, who is also known as Sadāsiva. From each Śakti appears a corresponding form called *Sādākhyas* (as one tenth of the corresponding Śakti).

From Parāśakti appears Śiva Sādākhyas
From Ādiśakti — Amūrta Sādākhya
Iccā Śakti — Mūrta Sādākhya
Jñāna Śakti — Kartṛ Sādākhya
Kriyā Śakti — Karma Sādākhya

Because of these five forms, He is called Sadāśiva.

Maheśvara emanates from this Sadaśiva as one thousandth part, through Kriyā Śakti. He creates the 25 forms of Śiva as an act of *Suddhamāya.* He is *Pravritta.* He is also called Anantesvara. The Śakti hereby becomes Bhoga Śaktis, like Manōnmani to Sadāśiva.

The Mother

The Primordial Mother creates innumerable souls, ripen their impurities *mala* and bestows supreme bliss. She removes the cycle of births and deaths of individual souls. She remains and appears to the individual souls, from whom the *malas* have vanished as undifferentiated illuminating light in the universal father Śiva.

According to Śaiva Siddhānta, though the souls are eternal, Śiva and Śakti are spoken of as parents for the following reason. At the time of great deluge the individual soul remains as a pure ego *Āṇava* without even the slightest knowledge of its existence. It remains as if it is non-existant. From this stage of apparent non-existence, the Supreme Śakti unveils its ignorance a little and make the soul realise its existence. It is in this sense She is called the mother and as she is inseperable from Śiva. He is called the father of the universe.

This concept that Śiva is the creator of the individual soul is recognised till the final realisation of the individual soul, which becomes *Śiva svarūpa* at the time of final emancipation.

Dr. Devasenapathi in his work '*Śaiva Siddhanta*' refers to these concepts as follows.

"Parāśakti is one viewed in a general way as the included intelligence. According to different in activity it becomes differentiated into three, effective energy congnitive energy and conative energy. These, again, are differentiated into many according to the differences, among their respective activities. Affective energy is the Lord's grace involved in removing the *mala* of the souls and granting them the attainment of salvation; congnitive energy is his knowledge of the ways by which he can do what he desires to do; and conative energy is what he wills to do and does accordingly".

"Where Śiva and Śakti unite we have *Sadāśiva tattva*. They both unite joyfully and cause the origination of the intelligent and inert universe. Nevertheless Śiva, is a celebate and Śakti is a Virgin".[1]

Validity of Vedas and Āgamas

The Śaiva Siddhānta recognise the validity of both Vedas and *Āgamas*. They are valid because they emanate from Śiva. The word *Āgama* is split into *a*, *ga*, and *ma*; *a* represents *Śivajñāna ga* represents *mokshasādhana* and *ma* stands for the destruction of *mala*. These are again differenciated into three as *Tantrakalā*, *Mantrakalā* and *Upadesakalā*. The *Tantrakalā* stands for such acts as *agnishṭōma*, '*Śivapūja*' etc.

We consider this statement very significant. It is clear, the Tantric rituals (*āgamic*), were modelled on, if not evolved from, Vedic sacrificial rites. It would be shown later that the construction of temples for deities also sought to give a permanence to these rituals in a visual form.

The *Mantrakalā* stands for *upāsana mārga*. That is controlling the mind and other senses and by medidating on the *nyāsa*, *ṛshi*, *chandas*, *adhidēvata*, *bīja* and *śakti* of the Lord, one choses. *Mantra* means that which protects the *man*, who medidates. (It might represent Vedic *mantra* or *Āgamic mantra*).

The *Upadesakalā* is that which teaches the *Śivarūpa* of Śiva, the individual soul and the bondage. *Āgamas* are divided into four sections as *caryā*, *Kriyā yōga* and *Jñānapādas*. *Caryā* and *Kriyāpādas* are included in *Tantrakala*; *yōgapadā* in *mantrakalā* and *Jñānapada* in *upadesa kalā*.

It seems to us that the division of *Āgamas* into four *padas* as *caryā*, *kriya*, *yōga* and *jnānapāda*, are artificial brought into force on anology with the four vedas. The *carvā* and *kriyā* are such divisions that the commentators have to defend the divisions rather feebly. According to the Siddhantins Vedas are eternal because they are the work of Śiva and because they persist upto the deluge.[2]

Vēdabhāhyas

Sivāgrayogin, the commentator raises an interesting question. Since the Vedas and *Āgamas* are valid according to Siddhāntins, as these were brought into existence by

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[1] *Saiva Siddhanda* by Dr. Devasenapatly, Madras, 1974, P. 107-08.

[2] *Ibid.*, P. 41.

Śiva himself, would they not be compelled to accept such agamic schools like *vāma*, *Kālāmukha* and even *Bauddha*[1] Here Śivāgrayogi has preserved a tradition for us. The tradition is that all these texts (*Vāma*, *Kālāmukha* etc.) were undoubtedly brought into existence by Śiva. But they are meant for those who do not accept the authority of Vedas and are also intended for deluding the asuras. This seems to be the stand taken by *Āgamas* like Kāmika which tell that these *Vāma*, *Kālāmukha* etc. are considered Vedabhāyas and are therefore invalid.

Here we see clearly an attempt by the followers of the Āgamic school to identify themselves with the Vedic school and reject the pure Tantric schools like *Vāma*, *Kālāmukha* etc. as invalid. In this commentary *Vāma*, *pāsupata*, *Lākula* and *Bhairava* are called non-Vedic *Vedabāhyas*. The commentator completes his identity with Vedic school by saying that prohibition to Tantric rites mentioned in smrtis like *Manusmṛtī* and others, relate only to the non Vedic schools.

The Chit Śakti of Śiva enters the *Bindu* which is pure Māyā *Suddhamāyā*, as a result of which Nāda emanates, '*a*' kārā emanates thus. The inseperable Śakti which generated this sound, is called *yogamāyā*. From this *Bindu* will emanate *Aparā bindu* which will manifest in order as *Sūkshmā*, *Pasyantī*, *Madhyamā* and *Vaikharī*.

Ambikā Śakti appears at the bottom of Bindu Śakti actuated by Śiva's will *Iccā*. Other Śaktis called *Vāma*, *Jyeshṭā* and *Raudra*, emanate from Her. Vāma will remain like a coiled sleeping serpant; Jyeṣhṭā like a stick and Raudrī like a horn with two branches.

Māyā taking on a lower form assumes the forms of sixteen Śaktis.

1. *Jayā*
2. *Vijayā*
3. *Ajitā*
4. *Parājitā*
5. *Nivirti*
6. *Pratiṣhṭā*
7. *Vidyā*
8. *Sānti*
9. *Indikā*
10. *Dīpikā*
11. *Rochikā*
12. *Mocikā*
13. *Vyomarūpā*
14. *Anantā*
15. *Anāthā*
16. *Anāsrtā*

These Śaktis will pervade the entire universe from *Śivatattva* to *Prthvī tattvas*. From these Śaktis the fifty letters commencing from '*a*' are produced. Without the Śakti, which is the form of letters, which is gracious, which is of the forms of sounds and meanings, there is neither the world of names nor the world of forms[2].

Bindu, Mohinī and Mahat

Bindu is the instrumental cause (*upādāna kārana*) of the Pure path Suddha adhvā. Mohini is the instrumental cause of the mixed path *misra adhvā* and Mahat is the

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1. Saiva Siddhānda by Devasenapathy, P. 78.
2. *Ibid.*, P. 45.

instrumental cause of impure path *Asuddha adhvā*. Śivāgrayogins gives the views of other schools like *Śivādvaita, Vāmādvaita*. Śivādvaiti holds Isvara as the instrumental cause —*upādāna kārana* of the universe.

Here we have a distinction between the Vāma school and Śaiva Siddhānta school. The distinction between *Suddha māyā* and *Asuddha māyā* have been accepted for the following reason for purpose of universal creation. Śaiva siddhāntins accepts *Vijjnāna kalā*. He has body, senses etc. The body senses of this *Vijñāna kalā* cannot emanate from *asuddha māyā* which is responsible for the lower regions. So *Suddha Bindu* is considered the instrumental cause—*upādāna* of the *suddhamāyā*.

While the Vāma mārgins hold Chit Śakti as instrumental *cause*, Siddhantins hold Bindu as the cause; this shows Bindu is different from Chit Śakti in Siddhānta doctrine. Bindu is also called *Yōga māyā*[1] in which the Chit Śakti enters and activates.

Regarding Chit Śakti, Sir John Woodroffee has the following to say "This pure consciousness or *cit* is the Paramātmā nirguṇa Śiva, who is Being-Consciousness-Bliss (*Saccidānanda*). That which is the nature of Paramātmā never changes not with standing the creative ideation (*Srishṭi Kalpanā*) which is the manifestation of Śakti as *Chit Śakti* and *Māyā Śakti*. It is this letter Śakti which according to Śakta tantra evolves".[2] This is at variance with the commentators view of Vama school. According to the commentator, Chit Śakti is the *upādāna* cause while according to Woodroffe, it is the *Māyā Śakti* which is different from Chit Śakti, that is the instrumental cause of the universe.

Vaikarī the transformating sound can be heard by others. It appears as an audible sound being in association with *udaya*, it appears in Buddhi as sound and word in association with vital breadth (*prāna vāyu*) and is the meaning of word uttered.

Madhyamā the middle sound is different from Vaikarī; it cannot be heard by others. It is also not formed by letters and their combination; nor is it in association with vital breadth (*prānavāyu*). It is an internal sound. It is in association with mild breathing.

Baisanti (*Pasyantī*) is that seeing or beholding sound which contains the fifty one syllables. It is also an illuminative entity and causes the production of the *Madhyamā Vāk*. It remains with *prānavāyu*.

Sūkshmā is a subtle, internal, illuminating knowledge-sound, from which the other three sounds emanate. All sounds dissolve at the end, in this *Sūkshmā*. It does not dissolve with other three sounds, but disappears only with the ego impurity (*ānavamala*) of the individual souls.

The individual souls do not recognise easily their selfs as different from this *Sūkshmā vāk*. The souls which have performed *Kalāsodhana* or the benediction of guru, will alone be able to distinguish this *vāk* from their individual souls.

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1. Ibid. Page 82.
2. 'Śakti and Śakta' by Sir John Woodroffe. Page. 275.

While discussing *Śivajñāna bodham,* we have seen that grace is considered the Śakti of Īsvara and that it does not exist without Śiva. The *Śivajnāna Śiddhiyār* echoes the same idea in dealing with the fifth sutra.

அருள் அது சக்தியாகும் அரன் தனக்கு அருளை இன்றி
தெருள் சிவம் இல்லை அந்தச் சிவமின்றி சக்தி இல்லை
மருளினை அருளால் வாட்டி மன்னுயிர்கட்கு அளிப்பன் கன்கட்கு
இருளினை ஒலியால் ஓட்டும் இரவியைப் போல் ஈசன்
(283)

Grace is the Śakti of Śiva. There is no Śiva without this Śakti and there is no Śakti without Śiva. Śiva will dispel the power of ignorance of the ripe individual soul and bestow grace through his Śakti.

The Role of Guru

The role of Guru (the teacher) in the spiritual evolution of the individual soul is clearly emphasised by Sir John Woodroffe in his Śakti and Sākta.[1] "Until a Sādhaka is a siddha all sādhana is or should be undertaken with authority and under the direction of a guru or spiritual teacher and Director. There is in reality but one guru and that is the Lord (Īsvara) himself. He is the supreme guru as also his Devi his power, one with himself. But he acts through man and human means. The ordinary human guru is but the manifestation on earth of the Ādinātha, Mahākāla and Mahākāli, the supreme guru residing in Kailāsa." This is of course in the tradition of smritis, like that of Manu. The Śaiva Siddhānta also lays great emphasis on the role of Guru. "Śiva comes in the form of the preceptor and performs dīksha"[2]

சூரிய காந்திக் கல்லிடத்தே செய்ய
சுடர்தோன்றி யிடச் சோதி தோன்றுமா போல்
ஆரியனாம் ஆசான் வந்து அருளால் தோன்ற
அடிஞானம் ஆன்மாவில் தோன்றும் தோன்றத்
தூரியனும் சிவன் தோன்றும் தானும் தோன்றும்
தொல்லுலகம் எல்லாம் தன்னுள்ளே தோன்றும்
நேரியனாய் பிரியனுமாய் உயிர்க்குயிராய் எங்கும்
நின்ற நிலை எல்லாம் முன் நிகழ்ந்து தோன்றும்
(8-28)

The following translation of the commentary on this verse, from Devasenapathis "*Śaiva Siddhānta*" clearly enunciate the role of Guru and the process of realisation.

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1. Ibid., P. 538-539.
2. 'Śaiva Siddhānta. Page 241.

"*Śivāgra yogin* speaks of the ritual, knowledge and sambhava intiation *Kriyā, Jnāna* and *Sāmbhava dīkshās*. By *Kriyā dīksha*, the bondage of Karma is removed. *Jnāna dīksha* is performed by contemplation, done with *Chit Śakti. Sāmbhava dīksha* is done with *Chit-Śakti* alone. In this way the paths *adhvās* are purified. What is meant by purification of *adhvās* ? Karma in the six paths *adhvās* are destroyed. Māyā is removed; the obstruction of ego *ānava* is also removed. By grades of intiation *dīkshā*, *tattvas* are removed one by one and the soul is restored to its real nature of pervasivesness and omniscience.

Caste and Sex

The Śaiva Siddhāntins like the Sāktas are more catholic in approach, so far as caste and sex are concerned. All persons irrespective of caste or sex or eligible for following the Siddhānta school. However there should be a genuine desire on the part of the individual to attain Śivajnāna. They should not consume prohibited food or drinks. They should have taken Saivite intiation *Śiva diksha*, at the hands of a competent guru. Even in the case of the twice borns, they must satisfy these requirements and can not become Śivajnānins, mearly by virtue of their birth.[1]

The Sākta tantras do not place any restriction of caste or sex on its followers. "The Tantra Sāstra makes no caste distinction as regards worship, in the sense that it may not challenge the exclusive right of the twice born to Vaidic rites, it provides other and similar rites for the Sudra. Thus there is both a Vaidic and Tantric *gāyatrī* and *Sandhyā*, and there are rites available for worshippers of all castes. Even the lowest outcaste *candāla*, if otherwise fit receive the Tantric intiation and be a member of a *cakra* or circle of worship. According to Tantra Sāstra a woman may not only receive Mantra but may as a guru intiate and give it".[2]

Path of Jnāna

Though the Siddhāntins accepts the four fold path as *caryā, kriyā, yōga* and *Jnāna*, he concludes that final emancipation is possible only through the path of knowledge *Jnāna mārga*. The *caryā, kriyā* and *yōga* paths lead one to *Jnāna mārga* and do not by themselves bestow liberation (Sutra-8). This *Jnāna* is bestowed through the form of a guru by the Lord himself.

This clearly indicates, that as a result of intense disputation and dialogue, the various schools have drifted away from *Bhakti mārga*, which was the most dominent form of expression from 6th to 9th century A.D. The impact is mainly due to the masterly exposition of *Jnāna mārga* by the Advaita teacher Sankara. His brilliance forced all the other schools of South Indian philosophies to resort to dialectics in preference to Bhakti. That is what we see as a new movement in Śaiva school. The days of the devotional hymns are no more. Even the emphasis on yōga one witnesses, in *Thirumandiram*, has been abandoned. Many ideas of those earlier movements have been integrated, but the superiority of the *Jnāna* is emphasised.

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1. **Ibid., Page 47.**
2. **Śivagrayogin's commentary, pp. 188-189.**

Sex

The Siddhāntin is not averse to sexual pleasures. He only tried to sublimate it by the story of Kāmadahana. "When the Lord was in yogic medidation, the celestials began to pine for sexual pleasures although Manmatha was present. Vishnu desiring to alleviate their distress, sent his son Manmatha, to influence Śiva. Enraged by his interference with his medidation, Śiva burned Manmatha to ashes. However taking pity on the souls, Śiva wedded the daughter of Himalayas and thereby caused great happiness to souls".

"Though Manmatha was present he was unable to stimulate sexual urge. It has to be sanctified by the Lords personal example, so to speak. We find here a healthy attitude to the problem of sex. The play and gratification of sexual instinct are not frowned upon. Nor is there any over emphasis on sex because release through medidation becomes equally obligatory".[1]

Bindu, Mohini, Mahat

The *Siddhiyār* accepts three entities i.e., *Bindu, Mohini* and *Man* (*Mahat*) as the material cause of the universe. Among them *Bindu* is the supreme entity, in which Śiva Śakti emanates. Only the *Mahāmāyā* is the primordeal natural cause. The space actuated by her is called *prakāsa, Mōhaka,* and *Ānjaka.* The same are called *Suddha, Suddhā—suddha*, and *Asuddha. Bindu, Mohini* and *Man* (Mahat) are synonyms of the same words. The universe that emanated from Bindu is called peaceful one *sāntātmaka*; the one from Mohini is called the terrible *ghorātmaka* and the one that emanated from Mahat is insentient *jaḍātmaka.* The primordeal material cause is *Kundalinī* also called *Mahāmāya* "says Śivagrayogin.[2] Śakti coiled round Śiva making one point with it is kuṇḍalinī Śakti.[3]

Vaidikas Cursed

Śivagrayogin has the following to say on Śivagamas. The Vedas do not mention anything about the worship of images from selection to installation, and from festival to the end. They do not also mention the objections raised by and the answers to the schools like Cāruvākas. Śivagamas deal with what had not been included in Vedas, besides the subtle meanings enunciated by Vedānta. As such there is no difference between Vedas and Āgamas. Treatises other than Vedas and Śivagamas are not valid. That this is the view of the Śivagnāna siddhiyār is clear from the following verse where he catagorically states so.

வேதநூல் சைவ நூல் என்று இரண்டே நூல்கள்
வேறு உரைக்கும் நூல் இவற்றின் விரிந்த நூல்கள்
ஆதிநூல் அநாதி அமலன் தரு நூலிரண்டும்
ஆரண நூல் பொது சைவம் அரும் சிறப்பு நூலாம்

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1. 'Serpant power' Sir John Woodroffe. P. 35.
2. Śivagrayogin's Commentary. P. 76.
3. 'Serpant Power', P. 36.

நீதியினால் உலகர்க்கும் சக்தி நிபாதர்க்கும்
தீதில் பொருள் கொண்டு உரைக்கிடம் நூல் சைவம் பிற நூல்
திகழ் பூர்வம சிவா கமங்கள் சித்தாந்தமாகும்.
(8 - 15).

There has been some stiff opposition from some sects to accept Saivāgamas as *Vaidic* in nature. The scholars of the period were also aware that the Vedas do not speak of image worship as a form of *Devata ārādhana*. So Arulnandi defends the Vaidic nature of Āgamas.

Śivagrayogins cites an interesting tradition of the non Vedic origin of Tantric worship.[1] 'Tantric worships are spoken ill off in puranas. Further some Brahmins who were cursed by sages like Durvāsa, Dadīci, Gautama, Kaṇva, Bṛgu and Upamanyu, approached Vishnu and Śiva and prayed for their lively-hood. In order that these Brahmins cursed by *Brahma sāpa*, will get their lively-hood, and the Asuras will be deluded, Āgamas were created. Dravida rulers like Sandilya and Chitranāma went to hell by following Tāntric rites'. Śivajnayogin explains this tradition as refering to non-Vedic Tāntric school and not to the Tāntric schools following the Vedas.

This tradition is again an indication of the non Vedic origin of the Āgamas. That Drāviḍa kings went to hell by following the Tantric rites might indicate that either the Tāntric cult had its origin in Dravida desa, or it was widely prevelant in that region. The association of Brahmins is an indication of the inter mixing of the Vedic with non-vedic schools.

ŚIVAPRĀKĀŚA AND SANKALPA NIṚĀKARAṆA

Umāpati Śivam

Next to Arulnandi, Umāpati Śiva of Korravankudi, was the greatest exponent of Saiva Siddhānta doctrine. Umapati Śivam was a prolific writer both in Tamil and Sanskrit. As many as eight of his Tamil works are included in the (14 works) the Siddhānta canon, popularly called Meykaṇḍa Sāstras. The eight Tamil works of Umāpati Śivam, are *Śivaprakāsam,*[2] *Sankalpa nirākarana, Thiru Arulpayan, Vinā venba* (question and answers), *Pōṛṛi Pahroḍai, Koḍikkavi, Nenjuviḍudūtu* (heart-messenger) and *Unmaineri viḷakkam* (the definition of true path).

Besides these Sāstric works, Umāpati is attributed with a few outstanding puranic works in Tamil. One called *Koyilpurānam* is on the Chidambaram temple, and the second is on the discovery of the Devaram hymns in the temple of Chidambaram by Rājarāja Chola. The work is called *Thirumurai Kanḍa Purānam*. The third is *Sekkilār Purānam*, on the life of Sekkilār, the brilliant author of *Periyapurānam*.

Of Umāpati Śivam's outstanding works in sanskrit are *Paushkara Bhāshya* and *Sataratna Sangṛaha*. While the former is a commentary on *Paushkara āgama*, one of

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1. Śivagrayogin's Commentary, P. 76.
2. Sankalpa-nirakarana—Mailanda Sattiram. Published by Dharmapuram Mutt. 1942.

the Upāgamas, the later consists of 100 verses collected from various Āgamas like *Svāyambuva, Nisvāsa, Devi yāmala, Devi Kālōttara* etc. Umāpati is second in discend, as an āchārya from Arulnandi. His *Sankalpa nirākarana* was completed in Śaka 1235 (1313 A.D.).

> "ஆசாஞகி வீசிய சமப்துடன்
> ஏழஞ்சிருநூறு எடுத்த ஆயிரம்
> வாழும் நற் சகனம் மருவாநிற்று"
> (சங்கற்ப நிராநரணம் பாயிரம் வரிகள் : 25 - 27)

This is one of the rare works for which we have a reference to the date of its composition by the author himself.

Śivaprākasa

The *Śivaprākasa* consists of one hundred verses, giving the outline of Siddhānta doctrine as expounded by Meykaṇḍadeva and elaborated by Arulnandi. The nature of the Lord, His manifesting Śakti, the bondage and the path leading to its removal are thus detailed.

The work begins with an invocation to the cosmic dancer followed by salutations to Śivakāmi, the consort of the Dancer.

Naṭarāja

"On our head and heart we shall entertain and cherish the beautiful lotus feet of him, who is the source of the Primordeal rising light, whose form is grace and wisdom, whose spreading tresses are the seat of honeyed flowers of *Konrai*, the crescent moon, the river Ganga, and the glistering serpent and who with intent to lift us from the endless chain of births, dances in the common hall of all souls to the applauding tunes of angles, of feasting eye of mother Umā the protector of all the world".[1] This translation however does not do justice to the original which has more to convey. It is a tradition to write the invocatory verse in such a way as to reflect the entire message of the book in a nut shell. Following this practice, Umāpati Śivam salutes Naṭarāja, the cosmic dancer, who represents the Supreme Lord.

He is ever shining, self effulgent, *nirmalaswarūpa* Paramasiva. He is Mercy and *Jnāna* incarnate. Through his grace, he manifests as *Iccā*, *Jnāna* and *Kriyā* Śaktis. Umā the mother of the universe witnesses the dance. Umāparamesvari is the material cause of the universe, according to Siddhānta doctrine. As such she is spoken of as the Mother of the universe. Śiva's dance is intended to remove the cycle of births and deaths. The dance of Śiva represents *Pañcakrityās* the five acts. The *Siddhiyār* gives the following verse.

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[1] **Sivapprakasam.—English translation by K. Subramanya Pillai, Dharmapuram, 1945.**

"உலகமே உருவமாக யோனிகள் உருப்பதாக
இலகு பேரிச்சை ஞானம் கிரியையுட் கரணமாக
அலகிலா உயிர்கட்கெல்லாம் ஒரு பயனுக்கி இயைந்து
நலமிகு தொழில்களோடு நாடக நடிப்பனுதன்".

Śivakāmi

The second verse extolling the greatness of Śivakāmi is important as it directly enumerates the concept of Śakti.

பரந்த பராபரையாதி பரன திச்சை
பரஞானங் கிரியை பரபோக ரூபங்
தருங்கருணை யுருவாகி விசுத்தா சுத்தத்
தனுகரண புவனபோ கங்கள் சுரங்க
விரிந்த வுபாதானங்கள் மேவி யொன்றுய்
விமலமா யைந்தொழிற்கும் வித்தாய் ஞாலத்
தரந்தை கெட மணிமன்றுளாடல் காணும்
அன்னை அருள் பாதமலர் சென்னி வைப்பாம்.[1]

She is all pervasive *Parāparai*, *Paripūrna parāsakti*. She Herself manifests as Ādisakti also known as *Tirōdha Śakti*. This Supreme Śakti, manifests herself as *Iccā*, *Jnāna* and *Kriyā* of the Lord and also the all merciful power that gives final emancipation (the last refers to *Parāsakti* aspect). She also activates pure and impure *Suddha* and *Asuddha Māyās*, each forming its own *tanu*, *kārana*, *Bhuvana* and *bhoga* (body, senses, world and pleasures). Yet She remains aloof, unstinted by their activities. She remains as a *Vimalarūpi* (purā). She also forms the seed of the five acts *panca krityas*. This Supreme Śakti witnesses the dance in the space *ambala* for removing the misseries of this universe. We salute this Cosmic Mother.

It may be seen that all the Siddhantic concepts, especially with reference to Śakti are vividly picturised in this invocatory verse.

The same concepts especially with reference to the nature of Supreme, and the Śakti, are given in almost the same vein in the two verses under the first *sūtra*. It is needless to give their translation, but the verses are so fine, we give them below.

பல கலையா கமவேதம் யாவையினுங் கருத்துப்
பதிபசுபா சந்தெரித்தல் பதிபரமே யதுதான்
நிலவுமரு வுருவின்றி குணங்குறிக லின்றி
நின்மலமா யேகமாய் நித்த மாகி
அலகிலுயிர்க் குணர்வாகி யசலமாகி
அகண்டிதமா யானந்த வுருவா யன்றிச்
செலவரிதாய்ச் செல்கறியாய்ச் சிரிதாகி பெரிதாய்
திகழ்வதுதற் சிவமென்பர் தெரிந்து ளோரே.[2]

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1. *Ibid.*, v. 2.
2. *Ibid.*, v. 13.

நீடுபரா சத்திநிக ழிச்சா ஞான
நிறை கிரியை தரவதனை நிமலன் மேலி
நாடறிய கருணைதிரு வுருவ மாகி
நவின்று பல கலைநாத விந்து வாதி
கடுமொலி வளர் குடிலை மாயை மேலிக்
கொடு வினைகொள் தனுகரண புவனபோகம்
பீடுபெற நிறுவியவை ஒடுக்கு மேவி
பிறங்கியநிட் களசகளப் பெற்றியாமே.[1]

It is interesting to see that *Suddhamāya* is here refered to as *Kuṭilā*. The commentator, Śivaprakāsar of Madurai, takes it as a synonym of *Mahāmāyā*.

Sankalpa Nirākarana[2]

The other work *Samkalpa nirākaraṇa* by Umāpati Śivam, is essentially a work of disputation of the other schools. We have already stated that this work was composed in 1313 A.D. In this work, *Māyavāda*, *Aikyavāda*, *Pāshanavāda*, *Bhedavāda*; *Śivasamavada*, *Samkrāntavāda*, *Īsvara Avikāravāda*, *Nimittakārana Parināmavāda* and *Saivavāda*, are examined and refuted. The school ultimately expounded is called Siddhānta Śaiva. This is a very important work, which gives the various schools that existed in Tamil country before 14th century A.D. From the point of the present study it is interesting in another way. Though it mentions many sub-schools, with in the Śaiva faith, it does not refer to the Vāma school. It seems to suggest that the Sākta school, did not have a seperate existence, but was integrated into the Saiva faith itself.

Sata Ratna Sangraha[3]

Umāpati adopted a novel method of collecting a total of one hundred verses from various Āgamas, and weaving into a fine book that outlines the Siddhānta doctrine in a cogent way. The Āgamas thus represented are :

1. *Devi Kālōttara*
2. *Deviyāmala*
3. *Kālottara*
4. *Vīrāgama*
5. *Mātanga*
6. *Mrgēndra*
7. *Nisvāsa*
8. *Paushkara*
9. *Sarvajnānottara*
10. *Śvāyambhuva* and
11. *Visvasārōttara.*

This work has been commentated by an anonymous author. Originally published in the Tantric texts series, by Pancanana Sastri, it has recently been published with an English translation by Prof. P. Thirujnanasambanadam, in the Madras University

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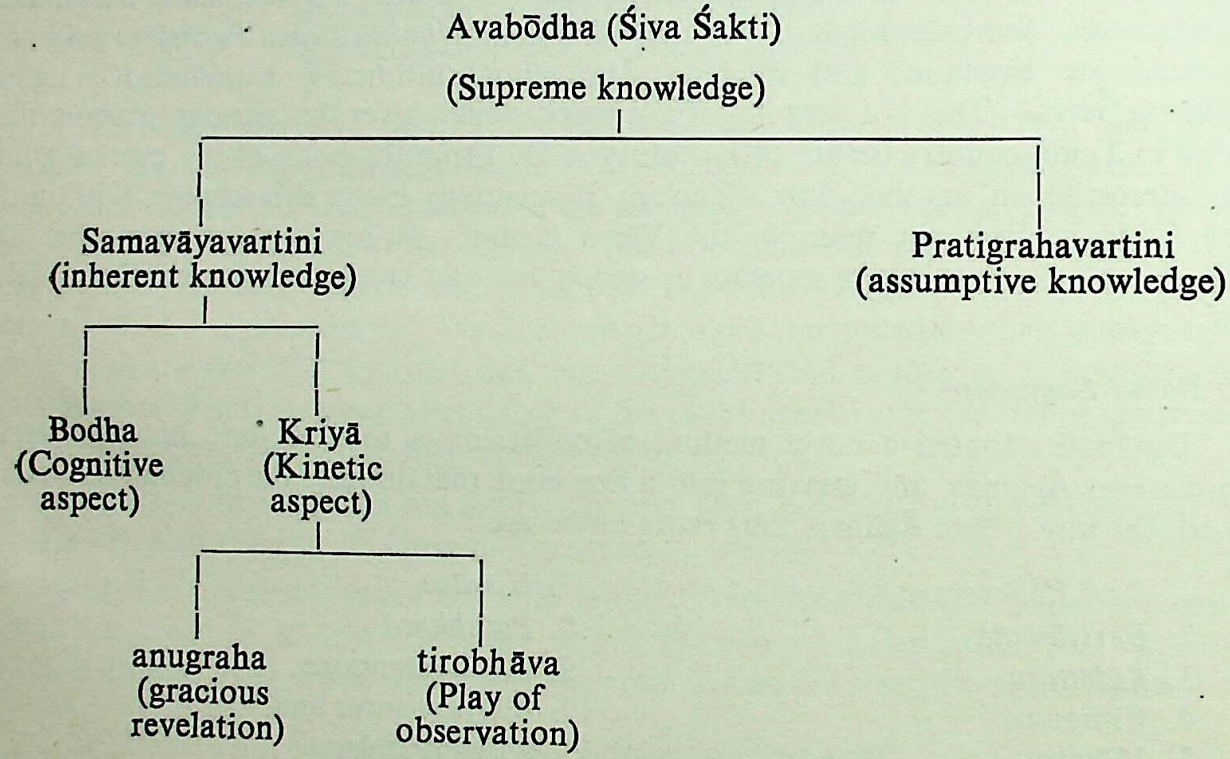
1. *Ibid.*, v. 14.
2. Sankalpa-nirakarana—Naikanda Sattiram. Page. 299.
3. Sataratna Sangraha—English translation by Professor P. Thirugnanasambandam. Madras University. 1973.

series. (1973). Since a number of Āgamic texts, that were in existent before 14th century A.D. are quoted by Umāpati, we examine briefly the work with special reference to Śakti.

"In order to enable the soul to be liberated from the triple bonds of *Ānava*, *Māyā* and *Karma* and to realise Śiva-hood inherent in him, knowledge flows from Siva". According to the commentator the Śivajnāna is identical with Śiva Śakti which comprehends also his will that bestows grace on the ripe soul. This Śiva Śakti has a positive and a negative aspect i.e. bestowal of grace and destruction of the bonds and this plays a role of Jnāna in leading to bliss.

'This Jnāna is of two kinds, the higher and the lower. The higher knowledge is called *Avabodha*[1] and the lower, the great *Sāstra*'.

The Subdivisions of *Avabōdha* may be indicated thus


Avabōdha (Śiva Śakti)
(Supreme knowledge)
Samavāyavartini
(inherent knowledge)
Pratigrahavartini
(assumptive knowledge)
Bodha
(Cognitive aspect)
Kriyā
(Kinetic aspect)
anugraha
(gracious revelation)
tirobhāva
(Play of observation)

'The locus of action of the Pati is in the form of his lustrous potency'.[2]

'That Śakti is supreme, subtle, all pervasive, and nectarine. It is free from any bond, tranquil and non different from God intensely eager to help the soul; this eternal Śakti is graceful; its description as a form is only figuritive'. The means is none other than Śakti, which being associated with the Supreme consciousness (Śiva) cannot be an entity lacking conciousness.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, Page 3.
[2] *Ibid.*, Page 9.

'That Śakti of Mahesvara is quite an auspicious one that bestows grace on everyone. Yet it is called *pāsa* in a secondary sense.

तासां माहेश्वरी शक्ति : सर्वानुग्राहिका शिवा. २२.

'This Śakti of Śiva brings about a transformation in the nature of the several Śaktis of *ānava* until that power is exhausted and when by its light comparable to the light of the sun, it brings about enlightment to the soul then it is called benevolent'.

Vāgisvari is the basic material-cause of the *tattvas* in the pure path *Suddha adhvā*.[2]

वागीश्वरी तु शुद्धाध्वमूलोपादान कारणं

The commentator says *Paushkara Āgama*, describes Vāgisvari as Parāvidya, as distinct from Māya. Which is identified with Nescience. Several synonyms of Mahamāyā occur in the Āgamas and they are recounted in *Nādakārika*. Among them we find *Nāda*, *Parama mangalā*, *Mālini*, *Mahāmāyā*, *Anāhata bindu*. *Aghoshā vāk*, *Brahma Kuṇḍalini Tattva*, *Vidyā* etc.

The *Kundalini* (*Mahāmāyā*) *Śakti* functions in accordance with the *Māyā* and *Karma* in the world of the pure (*Suddhādhva*) and forms the source of the Tattvas, *Nāda*, *bindu* etc. (*Visvasārottara*)

यथा कुण्डलिनी शक्तिः माया कर्मानुसारिनी
नाद बिन्द्वादिकं कार्यं तस्या इति जगन्स्थिति :

"This Śakti is to be distinguished from the Supreme Śakti which is inherent in and inseperable from Lord Śiva. The Kundalini Śakti is a step below that Śakti. It acts in conformity with *Māyā* and *Karma*, in the form of *Kalās* like *Nivrithi* and serves as the ultimate source of the *tattvas* like earth. It is also in the form of the power of the world *Vāk śakti* in conformity with *karma*. Śivajnāna Swāmi explains this Śakti as something which is coiled like a serpent existing severally in every soul in the form of *Nāda*, its own evolute though it is really one.

The first *tattva* that arises from Kundalini is the *Nāda* otherwise called Nāda *Tattva*. The next stage is *bindu*, otherwise called *Śakti tattva*. The next one is *Sadhākhya* followed by Īsa which in turn is followed by *vidyā Tattva*. These five constitute the five higher *tattvas*.

The *vidya tattva* comprehends the cover lord of that tattva, the seven queens of vidyā, namely *Bhrguni Brahma vetāli*, *Śthānumati*, *Ambikā*, *Rupini*, *Nandini* and *Jvālā* (commentary).

"That Supreme and pure potency inhering in Śiva is in reality only one. It is inseperable from Sambhu as heat is from fire. It is the connecting link between the soul and Śiva."

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1. *Ibid.*, Page 12.
2. *Ibid.*, Page 24.

एकैव वस्तुत : शैवी या शक्तिः निर्मला परा
अविनाभाविनी शंभो : शुचे : उष्णंइव प्रभोः

We have shown these Āgamic citations at length, only to show, that developing ideas with reference to Śakti were steadily and deliberately assimilated into the Śaiva Siddhānta school and the claim that they belong to one particular school of thought may have to be rejected.

JNĀNĀVARNAVILAKKAM

There is an interesting work, *Jnānāvarnaviḷakkam*,[1] composed by Guru Jnāna Sambandar, the first pontif of the Dharmapuram mutt. The work running to several hundred verses, has not however survived. Only a few verses are now available. But this has an excellant commentary by Velliambalavana Tambran Swami who was an erudite scholar, both in Tamil and Sanskrit. He gives the numbers of the original verses and elaborates their content. The commentary is such an excellant and elaborate treatise it is called a *Mahābhāshva.* The commentator went to Benares and learned both Sanskrit and Tamil treatises at the feet of Kumaraguruparar. As we know that Kumaragurupara was a contemporary of Thirumalai Nayak of Madura, the author of the commentary lived in 17th century A.D. is evident. Gurujnānasambandar the author of the original text lived in 16th century A.D.

As mentioned earlier the commentator was a remarkable scholar, who cites from more than one hundred texts in his works. The works cited are both in Tamil and Sanskrit, a good number of which have not survived. All that we have are the citations in this commentary. He quotes profusely from almost all the major Āgamas like Kāmika, Kārana, Cintya, Raurava etc., besides a number of other works. He cites many Siddhānta texts like.

1. *Siddhānta Samuccaya.*
2. *Siddhānta dīpika.*
3. *Siddhānta rahasya.*
4. *Siddhānta bōdha.*
5. *Sarva Siddhānta Vivēka.*
6. *Jnāna ratnāvalī.*
7. *Jnānasiddhi.*
8. *Jnānānta paribhāsha.*
9. *Jnānāchāra.*
10. *Jnāna dīkshā prakāsikā.*

Besides, a few *samhitā* texts like *Vāyu samhitā*, *Bhīma samhitā*, *Sūta samhitā* etc., and a few *sthalapurānas* are also prominently mentioned among which are *Chidambara Māhātmya*, *Svetāranya Māhātmya* and *Vriddhagiri māhātmya.* Among the Tamil works, *Tattvāmṛta*, *Paripūrnasiddhi* and the work of Nirāmayadeva are rare texts refered to.

This commentary is one of the most valuable works which gives the philosophy of various schools of Indian sects citing their original texts, that existed before 17th century A.D. All the sects cited are not necessarily South Indian in character. As mentioned earlier the commentator spent considerable period of his life in Benares, studying the texts there. Hence the citations must be considered all Indian in character with perhaps an emphasis on philosophies that were more popularly studied in Benares in the 17th century A.D.

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[1] 'Jnānavarna vilakkam' with the commentary of Velliyambalavana Tambiran, Dharma-Puran-1957.

The light this commentary throws on the Śakti cult is so bright that we are tempted to discuss it here rather in detail.

The Vāma school is called *Sāmbhava Sāstra* while the *Bhairava Sāstra* is called Dakshiṇa school. The *Yāmala* Sāstra is considered a mixed school, dealing mainly with the worship of Saptamātas.

> *Vāmam hi Sāmbhavam Sāstram Dakshiṇam Bhairavātmakam*
> *Misram Yāmalam iti uktam Saptamātr pradhānakam.*

The *yāmala* is also said to relate to *Navasakti vidhi.*

Nine books of the *yāmala* school are mentioned. They are :—

1. *Paratatvarāga*
2. *Paramāgamam*
3. *Śivagamam*
4. *Saktyāgamam*
5. *Kālāgamam*
6. *Deva prāsādam*
7. *Paratantrāvatāram*
8. *Śivapūjasāram* and
9. *Śivasādākhyaprasādam.*

The philosophy expounded by these nine Āgamas are also nine fold. They are :—

1. *Vāma*
2. *Mantravāda*
3. *Yantravāda*
4. *Aushadavāda*
5. *Karmavāda*
6. *Advaitavāma*
7. *Dvaitavāma*
8. *Misravāma* and
9. *Vāmasiddhānta.*

The Vāma and Bhairava sects are considered the inner schools of the Śaiva faith. The nine sub-sects among the Vāma school are outlined in the text as follows.

Vāma School :

The Vāma sect considers Paramēsvari Śakti as the Supreme who causes the Śakti, Brāhmi and Vaishnavi to create and protect the universe. In whichever form the Śakti manifests she assumes that name. Brahmā, Vishṇu, Rudra, Vidyēsas, Ganēsvaras, gṛhas, mothers, the stars, the planets and all other beings are Śakti's and reside in Śakti. It is only by her power and energy, these beings stay in their positions, have Śakti as their soul, assume forms and act.

> *Śakti samjnās tu te Sarvē*
> *bhajanti tadadhishṭitās*

The world is pervaded by Śakti; The world emanates from Śiva. Śakti is the Supreme Śiva.

> *Jagat Saktimayam Vyāptam*
> *Jagat Saktimayam Śivam*
> *Jagat utpadyatē Saktēs*
> *Saktis tu Parama Śivas*

Just as the sun cannot shine without the rays, so also Śiva doesn't exist without Śakti. Śiva is *Dharmi* and Śakti is *Dharma.* The commentator quotes a number of verses from

Ambāstuti, which is a very fine collection of *stotra* on Devi. Obviously this poem seems to have been very popular among the Sāktas then. One of the verses says, "Devi, some adore you as *Vidyā*, others as *ambaram* and others as *ānanda*, and yet others as *Māyā*, but we adore thee as the very teacher of boundless mercy".

Vidyām parām katicit ambaram amba kēcit
Ānandam ēva kēcit katicit ca māyām
Tvām visvam Āhur aparē vayam Āmanāmaha
Sākshād apāra Karunām gurumūrtim ēva.
(Ambastuti-27).

Mantravāda :

The second sect among the Vāmiṇs, layed emphasis on repetition of mantras like *svāha. svadhā. vaushaṭ, vashaṭ, Humpaṭ* etc. This sect consider these mantras as the form of Śakti, *Śakti svarūpā*. The release or final emanapation is achieved by *Mantropāsana* and so they are called *Mantra Vāmins.*

Yantravāmi :

The third sub-sect is called Yantravāmi who adore *yantras* as given by the *Vāmatantras* and believe that final emancipation is achieved through the worship of *Yantras*, mystical diagrams. The followers of this school believe that without *Yantras* nothing can be achieved by the repetition of *mantras*. The Yantras confer all the desired results. All the siddhis like, *Animā*, *Mahimā*, *garimā*, *laghimā*, *Īsatva*, *Vasiatva*, *Prāpti*, *Prakaraja* and others like Mōhana, Karshaṇa, *Uccāṭana*, *Sthambhana*, *Mārana*, *Vidveshaṇa*, *Bhēdana* and enjoyment in the other worlds are obtained by the worship of *Yantras*. They are all the forms of Śakti and therefore the worship of *Yantras* are the best way to which the mantras are only the parts angas.

Sākshāt Śakti svarūpam tat
Yantram ēva atra Sēvate
Tadangatvēna Mantrādi
Sēvā tulyam ca Sammatam

Aushadavāmi :

The fourth sect among the Sāktas consider that adoration of *aushadhas*, (medicines) as given by the Tantras will lead one to final bliss. All these, like *Kāyakalpa* observed for a specified period, are all forms of Śakti which will destroy even the cycle of birth. By this process one obtains a shining body and even powers to move through the air. The followers of this school do not believe in the efficiency of either of *mantras* or *Yantras*.

Karmavāmi :

Karma Vāmis are the other sects who believed that everything on earth is destined and no useful purpose will be served by following the paths of *Yantra*, *Mantra* etc. This school seems to be an absolutely a pessimistic school, prescribing nothing except that the knowledge of this in effaciable destiny would ultimate bestow release.

Advaitavāmi :

The *Advaitavāmins*, consider Śakti as the one indivisable absolute, and the entire universe is an apparent manifestation and not a reality. The entities like Karma, Māyā, the individual, the lord, *Pasu*, the bondage, do not have any seperate existence apart from Śakti. The followers of this school believe, that the final emancipation comes through knowledge. The belief that, unless the past action is completely exhausted, no release from bondage can be obtained, arise out of ignorance. It is possible to attain release through *Jnāna*.

Advaitavāmi Pakshē tu Sarvam Śakti Vivartakam
Tatā Śakti Vivartēna Vinā Kinjit na drsyatē.

Dvaitavāmi :

The *Dvaitavamīns*, accept three entities, *Śakti*, the individual and the bondage. The individual soul, like Śakti is omniniscient but due to its association with the beginningless impurity *mala*, remains ignorant. Being initiated by a competent teacher and observing the path taught by the Sākta Tantra, one will attain knowledge which will lead on to final emancipation. One may attain the same by observing either the *carya*, *yoga* or the *kriyā mārga* of the Sākta school. The *kriyā* would consist of doing *pūjās* to various manifestations of Śakti or Śakti Herself. In the realised state, the individual soul shines like Śakti, as a *Sarvajna*. This sub-sect is called *Dvaita vāma siddhānta*.

Misravāmi

The *Misravāmins* adore Śakti through liquor and meat and do *pūja*, *hōma* or *japā*. Śiva, his body, the concealment of knowledge, his soul etc., are all nothing his Śakti. The three entities like *Śakti*, *pasu* and *pāsa*, though are independent ones, yet unite and in the final stage of release become *Saktyātmakas*. Neither do they stand seperate from Śakti nor do they become equal to Śakti but become *Saktyātmaka*.

Siddhantavāmi :

The Vāma Siddhantins accept the three entities *Śakti*, *pasu* and *pāsa*. Following the eight Āgamas like Vāma, one should accept the instruments of knowledge like perception. The one Śakti pervades all the entities. By adoring Śakti with the strength of good path, and according to the discend of *Śakti nipāta*, through *Sāmbhavī dīksha* one attains *Mukti*. The good path consists of worshipping that Paramesvari through knowledge or Yōga or through the adoration of various manifestations of Śakti.

All these are considered the *Parināmavāda* of the Śakti schools. The Śakti is the creator of the universe. She assumes thousands of forms beginning from Parāsakti and ending with Kriyāsakti. By modification of Śakti the entire sentient and unsentient beings of the universe come into being.

Saktireva Jagat Kartrī Sā punah syāt Sahasrasah,
Samārabhya Parāsakteh Kriyā saktyanta Bhētadah,
Tadrūpa parimānēna Jagatsarvam carācaram,
Yadasti sarvam tad Śakti mūrtirūpam tadā Jagat.

This summary of various sub-sects of the Vāma philosophies are from a work called *Sarva Siddhānta Vivēka.* It is to be noted that the commentator cites a few lines from the original *Jnānavarana vilakkam* to which he gives the references from *Sarvasiddhānta Viveka*. So it is evident that even at the time of the original text, these sub-sects among the Vāma school were known. It is not known whether the author of the original text, Gurujnanāsambanda, knew the *Sarva Siddhānta Viveka*.

The commentator gives an interesting verse which defines a Sākta as one carrying *sūla, kapāla*, and *kaṭvānga,* and wearing ornaments made of conch shell and bones, and drinking liquor and eating meat.

Sankāstibhūshanai Yuktam Madhya Māmsam tu Sevitam
Sūlam Kapālam Katvāngam ityetad Sākta lakshanam.

V

TANTRISM IN SANSKRIT WORKS—SASTRIC

ŚIVĀDVAITA OF ŚRĪKAṆṬA

The Śivādvaita school of Śaiva cannon, was spearheaded by Śrīkaṇṭa, who from the stand point of Śaiva school, interpreted the Brahmasūtras of Bādarāyaṇa, as Śankara and Rāmānuja have done earlier. His work, called *Śrīkaṇṭa Bhāshya,* is an important school of the south, that calls our attention, with special reference to the concepts of Śakti.

Śrīkaṇṭa Bhāshya has been commented upon by that versatile scholar, Appayya dīkshita, of 16th century, in his commentary *Śivārkamaṇidīpika.* This has been studied in detail by S. Suryanarayana Sastri, in the Madras University series.[1] (Reprinted 1972). Mr. S. Sastri, discusses the similarities and dissimilarities in the approach to Vedānta sūtras between Śrīkaṇṭa on the one hand and Śankara and Rāmānuja on the other. The date of Śrīkaṇṭa has also been discussed in detail by the learned scholar, who assigns a probable date of early 12th century A.D.

Aupanishadī Mīmāmsa

Śrīkaṇṭa calls his own exposition as *Aupanishadī Mīmāmsa.* According to Śrīkaṇṭa, all the Vedāntic texts extol the Supreme nature of Brahman which is Śiva and all words like Nārāyaṇa, really stand for Śiva. His philosophy is brought out vividly in the invocatory verses. Śiva is *Paramātmā, Sacchidānandarūpa.* (Existence, knowledge and bliss) and he is the 'I' consciousness of the world. He creates the entire universe by his own Śakti as a painting on a wall and He is the end of all the Śāstras.

नमोऽहं पदार्थाय लोकानां सिद्धिहेतवे
सच्चिदानन्द रूपाय शिवाय परमात्मने १
निजशक्तिनिर्मित निखिल जगज्जाल निकुरुम्ब:
स जयति शिवः परमात्मा निखिलागमसारसर्वस्वम् २

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[1] Sivadvaita of Srikanta by S. Suryanarayana Sastri, Madras University, 1972.

Elucidating the same points Śrīkaṇṭa says Śiva is the nondualistic Reality, manifesting himself through Supreme Śakti as this universe of entire sentient and non-sentient beings. He stands revealed by such synonymous words, as Bhava, Śiva, Sarva, Paśupati, Parameśvara, Mahādeva, Rudra and Śambhu. By worshipping the divinities which are his partly manifestations the individuals attain supreme bliss, by his grace. This according to Śrīkaṇṭa is the message of the Upanishads

ततः सकलचिदचित् प्रपञ्चाकार परमशक्ति विशिष्ट अद्वितींयवैभवस्य, सकल निगमसार सामरस्य निधानस्य भत्र शिव शर्व पशुपति परमेश्वर रुद्र शम्भुप्रभृति पर्याय वाचक शब्दसार प्रकाशित परम महिमा विलासस्य स्वशेषभूत निखिल चेतन समुपासन अनुगुण समुदित निजप्रसाद समर्पित पुरुषार्थसार्थस्य प्रतिपादकं औपनिषत् शास्त्रम् P. 71

Śivatattva

Śrīkaṇṭa holds that Vedas and Āgamas are non-different in essence and are equally authoritative. Śruti is our sole authority and source of knowledge in respect of Brahman.[1] "Brahman is the material cause and the operative cause of the universe. Brahman creates himself and transforms himself. It is a change not of Brahman but in Brahman—not of substance but of form it is a manifestation, a development from subtle to gross".

जन्मादिः जगन्निष्टत्वेन बह्मणि असंभवः
ताटस्थ्येन लक्षणं उच्यते

The nature of Brahman being the cause of the universe is called *Śivatattva*. Śivatattva is that which possesses the qualities like Omniscience, which are defined as *Sarva-jñatva*, *Nītyatṛptatva*, *Anādibodhatva*, *Svatantratva*, *Alupta*, *Śakṭimatva* and *Ananta Śaktimatva*.

Five-Fold Acts

Brahman is the cause of creation, preservation, and destruction of the world and of the functions of concealment and grace in respect of the soul.

जन्म स्थितिप्रलय तिरोभाव
अनुग्रह कृत्यं अस्य P. 115

"The two last mentioned functions are distinctive of Āgamic doctrine. According to that doctrine, the soul is impure from the beginning of time, the impurity being innate as verdigis in action. The only way to get rid of it is to engage in action as one passes metal through fire in order to purify it. As action involves a cycle of birth and death, it is not likely to be undertaken unless it is presented as pleasant and attractive while the soul's own eternal perfection is concealed. The concealment of the real nature of things with a view to the ultimate good of the jīvas is called *tirobhāva*. It is an expression of Lord's energy (Śakti) though in view of the impurities with which it is associated, through which it operates, and to the removal of which it is directed, that energy is itself known as an impurity (*mala*). When by successive performance of action, and enjoyment of the fruit there of, the soul is purified and made fit for release; the Lord bestows grace on it and helps it on to the final realisation of what is essentially his own. The creation, preservation and destruction of the world results thus from the concealing activity of Brahman and they cease when the bestowal of grace supervenes. *Tirobhāva* and *Anugraha* are the two termini without which the intervening process have as such no significance; and the Āgamic recognition of these two function's is pressed into service by Śrīkaṇṭa in the interpretation of the Janmādi Sūtra".[1]

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[1] Sivadvaita of Srikanta, *op. cit.*, P. 91.

This *Pañca kritya* concept is reflected in Śiva Naṭarāja images wherein his inherent Śakti is also portrayed. 'Śrīkaṇṭa says the Lord, through his Icchā Śakti desired, may I become many; by *Jñāna Śakti* he considered the means and instruments necessary; with *Kriyā Śakti* he created the universe which is like a picture painted on the wall.

Śrīkaṇṭa on Śakti

"Śrīkaṇṭa rises to heights of poetic expression when he starts to write of the glory of *Parā Śakti.* She is of the Lord, of his very nature, figuring as his wisdom, strength and activity. She is the form of the intelligent and non-intelligent worlds that express his glory; she is existence, knowledge and bliss; She is unrestricted and undefined. It is She, indeed, that constitutes the forms and the qualities of Brahman. But for her, neither the six attributes nor the eight names would be predictable of Śiva".[2]

According to Śrīkaṇṭa, the cencept of innate and undivided Śakti of Brahman are gleaned from the Upanishadic sayings as

तुरीयं इमं लोकं ईशत ईशनीयु:
जननीयु: य: सर्वान् लोकान् ईशत ईशनीयु:
परम शक्तिभि:

Alupta Śaktimatva is defined as

स्वाभाविकशक्तिमत्वं अलुप्त शक्तिमत्वं
अपरिच्छिन्न शक्तिविशिष्टत्वं अनन्तशक्तिमत्वं P. 124

We have shown from the above citations that Śakti is an essential Principle, the undifferentiated, all knowing Supreme power of Śiva who is mainly responsible for the creation of the world. The mode of attaining final emancipation is achieved through *Bhakti Jñāna.* Except in minor details, Śivādvaita of Śrīkaṇṭa is in no way different from that Śaiva Śiddhāntins. It is the reason why some later commentators like Śivajñāna yogin claimed Śrīkaṇṭa as a Siddhāntin.

Chit Śakti

However there are certain differences in the doctrinal approach to *Chit-Śakti* and *Jivan Mukti,* which we may note in passing. According to Śrīkaṇṭa, the world of both

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1. Sivadvaita of Srikanta, *op cit.,* P. 138.
2. *Ibid.,* P. 160.

intelligent and non-intelligent beings, is the result of the transformation of the Lord. That is there is no difference between *Śakti* and *Śaktimān*. The non intelligent world consisting of bodies, instruments, and objects of enjoyment is derived from the same principle as the enjoying souls. In support of his Śakti concept, Śrīkaṇṭa quotes the following *Śruti* and epic texts.

परा अस्य शक्तिः विविधैव श्रूयते
स्वाभाविकी ज्ञान बल क्रिया च Svet 6.8

एक एव रूद्रो न द्वितीयाय तस्थुः
य इमान् लोकान् ईशत ईशनीभिः Svet 3.2

शक्तयो अस्य जगत् कृत्स्नं
शक्तिमान् तु महेश्वरः

शक्तिः तु शक्तिमत् रूपात्
व्यतिरेकं न गच्छति ।

तादात्म्यं अनयोः नित्यं
वन्हि दाहिकयोः इव

शक्ति शक्तिमतोः यस्मात्
अभेदः सर्वदा स्थितः ।

पराऽस्य विविधा शक्तिः
प्रबोधानन्दरूपिनी

एकेन एकस्वरूपेन
भाति भानोः इवप्रभा

All the *śruti*, *smriti*, epic, puranic and other texts, testify that Paramaśakti, is the form of (*swarūpa*) and quality (*guṇa*) of Śiva. She is of the form of the entire sentient and non-sentient beings of this world; (*Sakala chidachit prapañca mahā vibhūti rūpa*). She is the knower of everything and the embodiment of bliss, unbounded by time, space, etc. and is the inherent power of the Lord.

श्रुति स्मृति इतिहास पुराण अभियुक्त शक्ति प्रामाण्यात्
सकल चिदचित् प्रपञ्च महाविभूतिरूपा महा संविदानन्दसत्ता
स्वाभाविकी परम शक्तिः
पर ब्रह्मणः शिवस्य स्वरूपं च गुणः च

Thus there is no Śiva without Śakti and no Śakti without Śiva; without this Supreme Śakti, there is no all pervasive knowledge for Brahman. That He is Omnipotent, the cause of all becomings, the leader of everything; to be adored by all, the bestower of grace to all and the cause of all *purushārthas*, cannot happen without this Supreme Śakti.

तत्व्यतिरेकेण परब्रह्मणः
सर्वज्ञत्व सर्वशक्तित्व सर्वकारणत्व
सर्वनियन्तृत्व सर्व उपास्यत्व
सर्वानुग्राहकत्व सर्व पुरुषार्थहेतुत्व
आदिकं सर्वगतत्वं च न संभवति
किं च महेश्वर शिव महादेव
रूद्रादि परमाख्यानां अभिधेयत्वं च न संभवति P. 302

Chidambaram

However there is one point, on which Śrīkaṇṭa has thrown valuable light so far as this study is concerned and that is with reference to the word Chidambaram. The place of the cosmic dancer Naṭarāja is called Chidambaram, and the particular form of dancing Śiva, so familiar to students of South Indian Bronzes, is called *Ānanda Tāṇḍava*. How these words *Chidāmbaram* and *Ānanda Tāṇḍava* are derived, is interesting field of enquiry. Ananda Coomaraswamy has immortailised this form in his 'Dance of Śiva'. The clue to the association of the word Chidambaram and Ānanda Tāṇḍava is cited by Śrīkaṇṭa in his *bhāshya*, which shows that the concepts, evolved from vedāntic doctrines.

Chidambaram is the centre of Śaiva faith ever since Śaivism became the greatest religion of the South. The dancing form of Śiva assumed supreme significance gradually and for this popularity, apart from the Bhakti hymns, the philosophic doctrines expounded by eminent Śaiva teachers especially from 9th-10th centuries were also responsible to agreat extent. The concepts thus propounded by the Śaiva philosophers were gradually associated with the form of the dancer. The one such association is the *pañcakrityas*, the five-fold actions of Śiva. These were associated with Naṭarāja; the creation represented by *damaruka*, sustenance by the *abhaya* arm; dissolution by the fire in his arm; the act of concealment by the trampling of *apasmāra* (dwarf) with right leg; and the bestowal of grace with the lifted left leg and the *gajahasta*. This is a clear association of concepts with the existing form. There are four arms each with a distinct pose; together with the two legs, there are six parts of the Lord to which five acts are to be accomodated. We find the lifted leg and the left arm together indicating the fifth act. Obviously the *Pañca krityas*, were associated with this figure.

Chidambaram-Vedāntic

The word Chidāmbaram is clearly made of two words *Chid* and *Ambalam* (*Ākāśa*). This is beautifully explained in terms of *Śruti* by Śrīkaṇṭa. The *Śruti* says Brahman is Ānanda (*Ānandam Brahma*). Brahman has *ākāśa* as its body, *ākāśa sārīram Brahma*. The śruti reads

> आकाश शरीरं ब्रह्म । सत्यात्म प्राणारामं
> मन आनन्दं । शान्ति समृद्धं अमृतम् । p. 122

Śrīkaṇṭa explains *ākāśa* as Brightness which is *Chidambara*.

> आकाशते इति आकाशः
> प्रकाशः चिदम्बरं उच्यते P, 122

Again the Supreme Śakti, who is *Paraprakrīti*, who manifests herself as various entities of the universe is the Chit Śakti of the Lord which is Chidambaram.

> परप्रकृतित्वं चिदाकाशस्य ।
> "सर्वानि ह व इमानि भूतानि आकाशादेव
> समुत्पद्यन्ते । आकाशं प्रत्यस्तं यान्ति ।
> आकाशो ह वै नाम रुपयोः निर्वहिता"
> इत्यादि श्रुतिसिद्धम् P. 123

Further the *śruti* says "all these beings appear from *Ākāśa* and disappear into that *ākāśa.* It is *ākāśa* that gives name and form to these being". Chidākāśa is Paraprakriti.

> सत्यात्म सत्तारुपं । प्राणारामं
> प्राणस्सकलाराम भूता चिदम्बर
> प्रकृति: उच्यते । स्वरुप भूतायां तस्यां
> आराम: यस्य तत् प्राणारामम् P. 123

Brahman is the very existence *Sattārūpam. Praṇārāmam* means the *prāṇa* which is the support of all beings which again is nothing but *chidākāśa* or *Chit Śakti.*

> मन आनन्दं मनसि एव आनन्द:
> यस्य न बाह्यकरणे तत् मन आनन्दम् P. 123

Bliss is obtained in mind for Brahman without any external instruments. Here also the word Ānanda stands for *Chidambara Prakriti* because *ākāśa* according to śruti, is a synonym of *ānanda.*

> अत्रापि आनन्द इति चिदम्बर प्रकृति: उच्यते
> तथा च श्रूयते । को ह्येव अन्यत् क: प्राण्यात्
> यदेष आकाश: आनन्द: नस्यात् इति
> शान्ति: समृद्धं शिवता सम्पन्नं ।
> अमृतं अनादि मुक्तं ॥ P. 123

From the above discussions and citations it would be clear that Chit Śakti played an important role in the concepts of *Chidambaram* and *Ānanda Tāṇḍava.* The Chit Śakti, is Brightness, the support of the universe and is the embodiment of Bliss. All these ideas were associated with the Cosmic dancer with whom the five fold acts were also associated. Thus the philosophic doctrines associated with the form of dance of Śiva, assumes preeminent position.

ĀGAMAS

Āgamas constitute the most important group of literature, that deal with the worship in and the philosophy of, the temples of South India. All the *Āgamas* are referred to as Tantras (Sometimes *Mahātantras*) in the respective texts themselves, which goes to suggest that these two terms are synonyms. Volumes of literature are available on the origin and development of Tāntric literature.

The Āgamas are generally divided into Śaiva Āgamas and Vaishṇava Āgamas. The Śākta Āgamas also constitute a seperate body of literature though in the South, this group of literature seems to have been closely associated with the Śaiva school. We have precluded the study of Vaishṇava *Āgamas* in this enquiry, since that calls for an elaborate and independent study. However we do draw from them to complete the story of Śakti cult, wherever necessary.

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1. **Brahmasūtra bāshya, Śrīkaṇṭa ācharya (Sanskrit quotations from the above work-) Nirnaya Sagar Edition, Bombay, 1918.**

Mahā Āgamas and Upa-Āgamas

The Śaiva Āgamas are divided into principal texts and secondary texts; principal texts being twenty eight in number and the secondary 207,[1] though the number of the secondary texts vary. According to tradition Kāmikāgama is the earliest.

Parā and Aparā Vidyās

The Kāmika has an interesting passage in which it is said that there were two originally, kinds of knowledge one supreme (*Parā*) and the other transitory (*aparā*). The one that reveals the ever shining knowledge of Śiva is considered *Parājñāna.* Supreme knowledge. The other ones, like the Vedas, which deal with the nature of individual souls and the bondage are transitary knowledge *aparājñāna.*

अथवा भूत् द्विधा ज्ञानं अधिकारि विभेदत:
परापर भेदेन पति पश्वार्थं दर्शकम्
शिवप्रकाशकं ज्ञानं शिवज्ञानं परं स्मृतम्
वेदाद्यपर विज्ञानं पशुपाशार्थं दर्शकम्

Kamika; Vyasa Vidvad Sadȧs, Malar, p. 72.

It is interesting to see in this saying even Vedas being relagated to a secondary position.

The twenty eight principal texts are also divided into supreme (*Parā*) and secondary (*aparā*) texts.

1) *Kāmika* 2) *Yogaja* 3) *Cintya* 4) *Kāraṇa* 5) *Ajīta* 6) *Dīpta* 7) *Sūkshma* 8) *Sahasra* 9) *Amsumān* and 10) *Suprabheda* are said to be the Supreme (*parā*) Āgamas. The other eighteen as 1) *Vijaya* 2) *Nisvāsa* 3) *Svāyambhuva* 4) *Āgneya* 5) *Vīra* 6) *Raurava* 7) *Makuṭa* 8) *Vimala* 9) *Candrajñāna* 10) *Mukhabimba* 11) *Prōtgita* 12) *Lalita* 13) *Siddha* 14) *Santāna* 15) *Sarvokta* 16) *Parameśvara* 17) *Kiraṇa* and 18) *Vātula* are considered (*aparā*) secondary texts.

Śaiva and Raudra Āgamas

These eighteen texts are also said to belong to the *Raudra* class while the other ten are said to belong to the Śaiva class.[2] The *Kāmika* gives a different account. It says the twenty eight texts constitute the *Śaiva* class and the rest *Raudra* class. The *Āgamas* *Śaiva*, *Pāsupata*, *Soma* and *Lākula* among which the *Śaiva* is the most benign path while the rest belong to the wild path (*raudra*).

Śaivam Pāsupatam Somam Lākulam ca Caturvidham
Teshu Śaivam Param Saumyam Raudram Pāsupatādhīkam
Kāmikādyashtavimsati Tantrāni Śaivamiti Smritam
Tadeva Saumyam Ākhyātam Siddhāntam tu Tadeva tu
Tadanyat Raudram Ākhyātam Tantram Pāsupatādhikam

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[1] Vyasa Vidvad Sadas—Souvenir, Madras 1968. Page 71.

[2] *Ibid.* Page 72.

Āgamas—Vedic or Non-Vedic

The *Kāmika* gives another definition which goes against its own stand mentioned earlier. It says that all the twenty eight Tantras are the essence of Vedas

Vedasārārthmakam tantram
Tasmāt Vaidikam ācaret
Vedāntārthamayam Jñānam
Siddhāntam Paramam Subham

According to Makuṭāgama, the Raudra class is considered transitary (*aparā*), because they are non-vedic in character.

Śrutyuktācāra bāhyatvāt
aparam Raudram ucyate
Vaidikācāra sambandāt
Saumyam śreshṭham ity smritam

The Vedic and non-vedic nature, are so badly mixed up in these texts, that it would require an independent study to ascertain its true nature. We cite only a few example below. We have noticed earlier that Kāmikāgama considers Vedic knowledge as *aparā* and āgamic as *parā* but later the same text says Āgamas are the essence of the Vedas. It again says the vedic rites should be given precedence over āgamic rites.

Vaidikam tu purā kritva
tatas Saivam samācaret.

We have seen Virāgama being considered a Raudra class, which is non-Vedic; but Virāgama itself asserts that Śaivas should do everything as prescribed in Vedas.

Vedoktaih atha mantraih
Saivas sarvam Samācaret

Evidently the available texts of these works have many interpolations, inconsistent with their nature.

Agamas—Four Sections

The Āgamas are divided into four sections as (*pādas*) *Cāryā*, *Kriyā*, *Yoga* and *Jñāna*. In some instances the *Jñānapāda* is also called *Vidyāpāda*. The Āgamic verses are also called *sūtras*. All the twenty eight principal Śivāgamas have not so far been published. Even among the manuscripts so far obtained some parts are found wanting. However the text so far published do give a general picture of the nature of these class of texts.

The *Caryāpāda* of the texts deal with the rites and code of daily life of the individual, like his personal cleanliness, the daily and the periodical cermonies one has to perform etc.

In the *caryāpāda*, the followers of Śaiva path are classified into *Deśika*, *Mantravritti*, *Putraka*, and *Samayi*. Deśika is the teacher of Śivadharma. *Mantra Vritti* to one who is ever engaged in the recitation of *mantras*.[1] They are again divided into Vratins and non-Vratins i.e. those who have taken vow, either wear matted hair or shave their heads. However *Mrgendra Āgama* prohibits, sudras, fools, madmen, women and the like, wearing matted locks. The hairs are grouped into 38, 36, 5, 9 or 8 and matted. The texts also detail the process of making matted locks.

Those who take vows for a limited period are called *Bhautikavratins* and those who take vows till the end of their lives are called *Naishtikavratins*. For the *Vratins* certain prohibitions are prescribed. Both the *Bhautika* and *Naishṭika* Vratins should not eat meat, not drink liquor. They should avoid sexual inter-course, and should sleep on the ground only. They can take care of their personal belongings like rosary *danda*, *Kamandalu* etc, but should avoid meeting women in lonely places, and should not listen to music or see dance performances by women. They should also avoid wearing garlands or cosmetics. When a *Bhautika Vratin* has completed his period of vow he can duly engage himself with wowan.[2] The *caryapāda* goes on, to detail the various Śaiva rites, the conduct of the teacher and the taught. It also prescribes the rites of purification by those who sverve from the path.

Kriyapāda

The most important part of the Āgamas, is perhaps the *Kriyapāda*, which deals with the rites of temple from selection of site to the installation of the deity and from daily rites to the end of all festive rites in detail. This part consists of architectural details, iconomentry, iconographic descriptions and the daily and occasional rites and festivals.

Worships are divided into personel worship (*ātmārtha pūja*) and worship for others (*parārtha pūja*). Each *pūja* begins with the five purificatory rites called *panca suddhis*. (1) *Ātma suddhi* (self purification) (2) *Bhūta suddhi* (purifying the seat) (3) *Dravya suddhi* (purification of objects used in worship; (4) *Mantra suddhi* (Purifying the chants), and (5) *Bimba suddhi* (purifying the image).

The whole process is a psychological atunement to the divine nature of the worship. In most of the Śaiva texts, worship in five circles (*pancāvarana*) are prefered, but in other forms of worship like Sākta, the nine circle (*Navāvarana pūja*) seems to have been popular.[3]

The worship begins with the offering of five spheres (or seats) called *panca āsanas*. They are *Anantāsana*, *Simhāsana*, *Yogāsana*, *Padmāsana* and *Vimalāsana*, one placed over the other. Each seat has particular deities and the supreme Lord resides above all these seats. The five seats are included in the 36 *tattvas* beginning from *prithvī-ādhāraśakti* and ending with *Śiva tattva-Kuṭila Śakti.*

The Supreme Lord who resides above these spheres is the formless Supreme (*nishkala*) who is now invoked with form (*Sakala*), as chants (*mantra sarīra*). Various

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1. Mrgendra Āgama—Pondicherry 1962. Page 207.
2. *Ibid.* Page 213.
3. Vyasa Vidvad Souvenir. Madras. 1963. Page 60.

parts like head, hands etc. are now attributed to him by medidation. First they are conceived as five major parts, as head, neck, chest, naval and leg. To these parts are attributed the five Śaktis or *kālas;* from foot to knee is attributed *Nivritti kāla*; upto the naval *pratishṭā kalā*; from the naval part to the heart is *Vidya kalā*; upto the neck is *Sānti kalā* and above *Sāntyātīta kalā*.

After this *kalā nyāsa* the subtle parts are invoked with 38 *mahāmantras*. These are the attribution of sacred syllables to the centres of six psychic powers such *mūlādhāra svādhisṭhāna etc.*

In *Mūlādhāra* is seated Mahāganapati with his consorts; in *Svādhishtāna* is Brahma with Gayatri and Savitri; Vishnu with Śri and Bhū, is seated in the next centre called *Mani pūraka*; Paramesvara is seated with Gauri and Ambika in the next centre called *Anāhata*. The next centre *Visuddhi* is the seat of Paramesvara with *Unmādini* and *Vākvādini* and in the last seat *Ānjā*, is seated Paramaśiva with Parāśakti.

After invoking the Lord in the gros and the subtle forms his weapons are medidated upon. These invocations are performed simultaneously with *mantras* (chants) *kriyas* (actions) and *Chayanas* (medidations).[1]

This process of psychic transformation is essential for both personal worship and worship for others.

The *Kriyāpādas* give the definition of main and secondary icons, the process of making them, the rites connected with their individual installation and other rites. The preparation of sacrificial altars, connected with each rite are also given in detail in these texts.

Yogapāda

The Yogapāda of the Āgamas deals with control of individual body and mind, and channelling them towards the Supreme Lord. This consists of the eightfold path of the Yogic school. This process is also called *ādhāra* and *ādheya*, *ādhāra* constituting the first six parts and *ādheya* the last two parts of yoga. The eightfold path is *Yama, niyama, Āsana, Prānāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhārana, dhyāna* and *Samādhi*. We need not go into details of this process since there is not much difference between the Śaiva school and the yoga school of Patanjali in this aspect.

Jñānapāda

The Jñānapāda of the Āgamas deal with the nature of creation, the knowledge of the Lord, the individual soul, the nature of the bondage and the process of attaining liberation. This would be the important portion dealing with the philosophy of the Śaiva school. As we have mentioned earlier this part is called *vidyā pāda* as well.

Karmānta, Jnānānta

It is interesting to mention that in some later texts the Āgamas are divided into only two parts as *Karmānta* and *Jñānānta*, a distinction clearly imitating the vedic divisions as *Karma kānda* and *Jñāna Kānda*.

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[1] *Ibid.* Page 60-65.

Much has been written on the origin of the Āgamic cults. S. Suryanarayana Sastri struck what seems to be an acceptable course on this subject. "Assuming that the non sacrificial Āgamic cult was neither earlier than nor contemporaneous with, but subsequent to, the Vedic cult, the movement away from sacrifices may well have been due to a realisation of the impermanence and the comparitively small worth of the fruit there of, a realisation which certainly came to the *aupanishada* seers. The weekness of the followers of the Āgamic cult would then be manifest not in the revolt against sacrifice but in the variety of spiritual consolation sought that being so to speak, externally centered, while the aupanishada teaching was self centered. It is also possible to contend, with some measure of reason, that the Āgamic cult which was that of the priestly classes, officiating for themselves or for others, were both indigenous that they existed and grew up side by side from the earliest times without any extraneous influence, and that the distinction between the two in no sense be racial"[1].

But as they exist today the 28 principal Āgamas admit that they are the essence of vedas and in that sense are essentially vedic in nature. Most of the chants they specify are vedic mantras and their terminology is nothing but vedic. Inspite of such associations, there have been at every stage attempts to brand the Āgamic schools as non-vedic by the pauranic and purely vedic followers. As a result certains Āgamic schools assimilated many of the vedic rites and began to condemn other Āgamic schools as non-vedic. Some Āgamic statements, claiming that they are superior to Vedas, are not wanting. This clearly indicates a continuous process of assimilation and division between the vedic and Āgamic cults.

Vedic School Relegated

During the centuries when great number of temples were being erected especially by the rulers themselves either as a mark of their victories or as an act of pious dedication, the Āgamic school had greater and closer contact with the ruling and wealthy class, slowly relegating the vedic school into the background.

In the Āgamas, the Śakti concepts are to be seen broadly in three forms. (1) In the description of various images, many Śakti images are included (2) in the Jñānapāda while discussing the philosophy of the school, the nature of Śakti and her relationship with the Supreme etc. are detailed, and (3) in the rituals, especially with *kalāsas* (water vessels), Śakti is dealt with seperately.

It is again needless to go into these three broad divisions of Śakti concepts in all the available text but we will only indicate here their general nature.

Manonmani—Kumbhas—Śivakumbha and Vardhani

Pouring of sacred water from auspicious water-vessels form an important rite in temple rituals. These rites are called *Kumbhābhisheka* and *Kalasa snapana*. The deity is

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1. Sivadvaita of Srikanṭa—Suryanarayana Sastri. Madras. 1972. Page 72-73.

invoked in the water vessel and while pouring the water on the image, the respective power of the deity is transfered to the image. In Saiva rites the principal water-vessel is called *Śiva Kumbha*, which would be placed in the centre, wherein the Supreme Lord as Sadāsiva is invoked. As mentioned earlier, Śiva is accompanied by his Śakti in every aspect. A seperate water vessel slightly smaller in size than the *Śiva Kumbha*, is placed to the left of the main vessel. This second vessel is called *Vardhani*. In this vessel, the Supreme Śakti as Manonmani is invoked. Around the *Śiva Kumbha* and *Vardhini*, are placed eight smaller vessels in which the Vidyeśvaras are invoked. These are placed in a specially decorated platform under a special pavilion. These water vessels are filled with sacred water and carry mango leaves, a cocoanut and *kūrcha* of *dharbha* grass. Externally they are decorated with cotton threads and new clothes. How these *Kumbhas* play their role in temple consecratory rites, is given in Rauravāgama.[1]

Lingaprathishṭā

In the installation of Śivalinga the following process is prescribed. The Linga, carved to size and cleaned according to the rites is placed in the pavilion. The linga part would be kept lying with its head in the east and face down. It should be covered with red cloth. The *Śiva Kumbha* is placed near the head of the linga and to the left of it should be placed *Vardhani* and around them the eight water vessels. The *mūlamantra* is invoked in *Śiva Kumbha* and the Supreme Lord as Sarvesvara is medidated upon. In the principal *Kumbha* Sadāsiva is invoked. Sadāsiva is conceived as standing on a lotus seat with five heads, and ten arms, beautified with fine cloth and ornaments. He holds in his right arms *Sula*, *axe*, sword, *vajra* and fire while the left hands hold *pāsa*, *ankuśa* snake, bell and *abhaya*. He wears *jatā makuṭas* and flower garlands. (The Sūkshmāgama gives the same form of Sadāsiva with slight variations in the weapons held in arms. According to it, *sūla*, Axe, *vajra*, sword, and *abhaya*, are held in the right arms while in the left *pāsa*, *ankusa* fire, sword and *varada* are shown.)

In the *Vardhani*, Manonmani Śakti is invoked. She is personified as three eyed, four armed, benign Goddess with prominent breasts, thighs and organ; she is golden in colour and wears *kirīta makuta*. Bedecked with jewelled ornaments she wears silken garments. She stands on a lotus pedestal in *tribhanga* pose. In the front arms she holds *abhaya* and *varada* poses while in the rear arms she holds lotus and lilly. The *Kāranāgama* gives the same description in addition to a two armed form of the Devi in which she is said to carry lilly and hanging arm.

Vidyesvaras are invoked in the other *Kumbhas*. All these rites are accompanied by offerings in fire altars. Appropriate altars are made and to the chanting of mantras, ghee is poured into the fire. The fire itself is called *Śivagni*. Śiva and other deities are to be invoked in the fire altar also. The *Dīptāgama* gives a detailed description of various deities constituting the five circles (*pancāvaranās*). The Āgamas prescribe various *āhutis*, the offerings in fire. An important *āhuti* is done with ghee to the chanting of the Vedic mantra.

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[1] Rauravagama Ed. by N.R. Bhat. Pondicherry.

Trayambakam Yajāmahe
Sugandhim Pushṭi Vardhanam
Urvārukam iva bandanāt
Mṛtyōr mukshīya mām ṛtāt.

This offering is repeated one hundred times.

The *Dīptāgama* states that offering should be made in the altar with the *Gauri Brahma angavidyā*. It is the *āhuti* with the mantra, *Gaurimimāya*.

Gauri mimāya Salilāni Takshati

(*Taitrīya arnyaka* 1.1.37).

This also is accompanied by the *Gauri Gāyatri* which is given as

Aum Mahādevyai ca vidmahē
Rudrapatni ca dhīmahi
Tanno Gaurī pracōdayāt

(*Yogaja* T. No. 161 p. 38)[1].

Thus in every aspect of the rite, Śakti is given equal importance with Śiva. The final or what is called full *āhuti* is a vedic rite.

After this fire offering is over, the linga is carried to the accompaniment of music, into the sanctum. The supporting slab called *ādhārasilā* is put in position. Over this are placed precious gems, golden flowers etc. and then the linga set in position, and cemented.

Śakti Transfered

From the sacrificial pavilion the *Śivakumbha*, *Vardhani* and other water vessels are brought in procession to the sanctum and placed before the linga. Again Sadāsiva Manonmaṇi and Vidyēsas are worshipped at this stage. By meditation the *bījaksharas* are transfered from the *kalasas* (water vessels) to the linga. When this has been effected for Sadāśiva, Manonmaṇi, Śakti is transfered from the Vardhani vessel to the *piṭha* in the left. Likewise *Vidyēśas* are also to be done around the *linga piṭha*. Then the water from the water vessels is poured; the *Śiva Kumbha* water on the Linga, the *Vardhani* water on the *piṭha* and water from other vessels around the *piṭha*. While *Rauravāgama* speaks of the installation of the linga and the *Yoni piṭha*, in two different chapters, *Ajitāgama*[2] deals with them in the same chapter.

Yoni Piṭha Prathishṭa

Since the *Yoni piṭha* of the linga, is the embodiment of Śakti, it receives special attention. A seperate pavilion is erected with a pedestal where the *Yoni piṭha* is placed after being duly carved and purified. In front of it is placed the main water vessel *pradhāna Kumbha* with eight vessels *Kumbhas* around it, altogether being nine. In the principal vessel is invoked Gauri and in the other vessels, *Vāma*, *Jyēshṭa*, *Raudri*, *Kāla Vikarani*,

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1. *Ibid.* Page 33. Foot Note.
2. Ajitogama—Pondicherry.

Balavikarini, Balapramathini and *Sarvabhūta damani* are invoked. In this rite we find all the vessels are invoked with only the Śaktis.

The offerings in the Vedic altar are performed seperately for this rite as well. The altar would be in the form of a *Yoni*. There the Vedic chant *Gauri mimāya* is chanted and offerings made. The *purnāhuti* (the final full offering) is made to the accompaniment of *Gauri Gāyatri* as

Aum Mahādevyai ca Vidmahe
Rudra patniyai ca dhīmahe
Tanno Gauri pracodayāt

yogaja. T. No. 161. P. 38.

Then the *piṭha* and *kumbhas* are taken into the sanctum after worshipping Gauri, Vāma and others; the *piṭha* is lifted and inserted into the linga through the head. After it has been put in position the *bījāksharas* (sacred syllables) are medidated upon and are transfered to the *Yoni piṭha* from the vessel.

Consecration of Iccā, Jñāna and Kriyā Śaktis.

The Kāmikāgama gives an interesting additional rite at this stage. The *Yoni piṭha* of a linga consists of three parts, the lower part with an inverted lotus; a central part like *Kumuda* and the uppar part with the upturned lotus. Through medidation the invocation of the three Śaktis, *Iccā Śakti, Kriyā Śakti* and *Jñāna Śakti* is made in order. That is the reason why the Śakti called is here *Tattava Tattvesi* and *Mūrti Murtisvari.* (Raurava p. 32.) Then the water from the principal vessel is poured over the *piṭha* followed by the other vessels.

Thus the concept of the Principal Śakti of Śiva, and the other manifesting Śaktis like *Iccā, Jñāna* and *Kriyā* are consecreted in the linga and *Yonipiṭha.*

Kālasa Snapanas

We have seen the invocation of Śakti in the consecratory rites of linga and its *Yonipiṭha,* with the water vessel called *Vardhani*. After consecration, special oblations are performed on select festival days. These consists of doing *abhisheka* with many *kālasa* water, the number of Kalasa varying according to the importance of the festival or the ability of the Yajamāna; from 8 *Kālasas,* to as many as one thousand and eight *Kālasas* are used in such rites. In all these cases, the Principal vessels are *Śiva Kumbha* and *Vardhani*, representing Paramesvara and Gauri as mentioned earlier.

Śivakumbha should be four times the size of the ordinary *Kālasa* and the *Vardhani,* two times. If the *Śivakumbha* and the *Vardhani* are made of gold, the other vessels should be of silver. If they are of Silver, other *Kālasas* should be made of copper and if the main two are made of copper, the others should be made of clay. The *Kumbhas* and *Kalasas* are filled with fragrant water duly filtered and then covered. In the Śivakumbha. Five precious gems (*Pancaratnas*) should be placed while in the *Vardhani* should be placed gold leaves. After performing *homas* in fire altar, Śiva is medidated upon in the Śivakumbha. He wears *Jatāmakuta* and crescent moon. Sambhu, white in colour is three-eyed Lord, carrying *mṛga*, *parasu*, *abhaya* and *varada* in four arms

Svetam trilocanam Sambhum Jatāmakuṭa Samyutam
Candrāvayava lakshmānam Sarvābharana bhūshanam
Caturbhujam prasannāsyam Varadābhaya hastakam
Krishnaparasu samyuktam dhyātva ca āvahanādibhih

(Ajite—Kriya 29-109).

This is followed by an invocation of Devi as Gauri. 'She is two armed, beautiful in all her limbs; adorned with jewels and is golden in colour'

Hemavarnām dvinetram ca
Pūrna caṅdra nibhānanām
dvibhujām Sarvahṛdyāngim
sarvābharana bhūshitām
Vardhanyām tu yajet gaurīm
Svanāmapāda mantratah[1]

For both the Kumbhas, the *mudra* called *Kalakarni* is offered. *Lingamudra* is offered for *Śivakumbha* and *Manorama mudra* for the *Gauri kumbha*. Again *Surabhi mudra* is shown for both the Kumbhas. In the *abhisheka*, the *Śivakumbha* water is poured over the linga and *Vardhani* water over the *piṭha*, followed by water from other kālasas.[2]

Sruk as Śakti

The concept of Śakti is also carried to sacrificial laddles called *Sruk* and *Sruva*. In these laddles the three *tattvas* called *ātma*, *vidyā* and *Śiva* are consecrated. The *Sruk* is conceived of as Śakti and the *Sruva* as Sambhu.

Sruci Saktim Sruve Sambhum
Vinyaset ca Kramena vai[3]

(*Ajita*, *Kriya*—21-78).

Gauri

The installation of Supreme Śakti as Gauri is dealt with in *Raurava*, *Amsumadāgama*, *Acintyavisvsādākhya*, *Kāmika*, *Kārana*, *Yogaja*, *Sahasra*, and *Suprebheda Āgamas*.

Vira, Yoga and Krama Śaktis

The Rauravagama classifies the Gauri images under three classes as *Vira*, *Yoga* and *Krama*. When Gauri is installed seperately (standing) it is called the *Vira* class (or *Kevala*). When it is installed with the image of Śiva, it is considered of the *Yoga* class; when installed in the *prakara*, sleeping chamber, or as a processional deity, it is called

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1. *Ibid.*—Kriyapada 20; 100.
2. *Ibid.* Chapter 29.
3. *Ibid.* 21 : 73.

the *Krama* class. The *Amsumadbheda* divides the images under two classes as *Svatantra* and *Kevala*. The image having its own secondary deities (*Parivāra*) is called *Svatantra* (also called *Vira*) and the one devoid of *parivāras* called *Kevala*. The *Kāmikāgama* devides it yet another way. The Devi images are classified under *Vira*, *Bhoga* and *Yoga* varieties. *Vira* is of the Svatantra class. *Yoga* is that which has the *pitha* and *Bhoga* is that which is accompanied by other images. The *Suprebhedāgama* has a different classification.

According to the *Raurava Āgama*, *Vira* class of images should be in *samapāda* while *yoga* and *krama* classes should be in *tribhanga* pose. The description of Devi in *Raurava* runs as follows; standing with two arms and two eyes; she wears *Karandamakuta* or *Kesabandha*; lotus or lilly in the right, while the left is hanging. An alternative description in the same *Āgama* says that the Devi would carry lilly or lotus in both the arms. *Virāgama* also gives the same description.[1]

Gaurīprathishṭā

For the installation of the Devi image a special mandapa is erected in front of the main shrine or the shrine of the Devi. The sculpture is placed after due purificatory rites. By the side of its head, the *Gaurikumbha*; which is the main vessel *pradhānakumbha* is placed; around it are placed eight *Kumbhas* for *Vāma*, *Jyeshṭa*, *Raudri* and other Śaktis.

The *Kāranāgama* prescribes that the *Gauri Kumbha* should be placed to the right of the image. In it are to be placed golden lotuses, The form of Gauri should be medidated and invoked in the vessel. Around the *Gauri Kumbha* are to be placed eight *Kumbhas* for eight Śaktis. Their respective *bījāksharas* are to be invoked in each and then the *mudras*, viz *Mukuli*, *Padmamudra* and *Bimbamudra* are to be shown.

This is followed by *homa* in the altar *Kunda* (*Yoni Kunda*). The *Samit homa* is performed with *Gauri Gayatri*; the *ghrta homa* with the *mantra*, *Gauri mimāva*; *caru homa* with *sikhāmantra*; each homa is to be done one hundred times.

The *Kāranāgama* states that Devi standing on a red lotus is to be propitiated in the centre of the altar.

Samit homa with *Sadyojāta* hymn
Ghrta homa with *Gauri mimāya* hymn
Caru homa with *Aghora* hymn
Lāja homa with *Vāma* hymn
Tila homa with *Astra* hymn
Sarshapa homa with *Kavaca* hymn, and
Tila homa with *Pancama* hymn.

Each one should be offered one hundred, fifty or twentyfive times. This is to be followed by twentyfive *āhutis* with the*m antra-Gaurimimāya*; then one hundred *āhutis* are done with *Gauribīja*. After these fire offerings, the individual parts of the image are to be touched. Slight variations are noticed in *Vīrāgama*.

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[1] Rauravagama—Kriyapada 31 : 5—8v.

Rauravāgama, states that holding each limb of the image, ten *āhutis* are to be performed and this is called *sparsāhuti*, *Suprabhedāgama* gives the *Gauri Gāyatri* as

Ganāmbikāyai Vidmahe
Mahātapāyai dhīmahī
Tanno Gauri pracodayāt

which is at variance with the *Gauri gayatri* mentioned earlier.

For purposes of installation, the final oblation *āhuti* is performed the next day, with *Gauri Gāyatri mantra*. Then the image is taken inside the sanctum to the chanting of music and dance. After the image has been set in position, the Gauri vessel and the other vessels are brought in; the Devi is propitiated, the *bījas* are transfered from the secred vessel to the heart of the image by medidation; The respective *Kalās* are invoked in the image and finally the sacred water from the vessel is poured over the image. This is followed by regular *archanas*, and food offerings.

It is of interest to note that while in the installation of linga and other images, the *Sivakumbha*, finds the principal place, in the installation of Gauri, it is not at all brought into use. We have already noticed that *Vardhani* vessel, standing for Sakti is an invariable necessity along with *Sivakumbha*.

After due consecration and worships are completed, a special invocatory verse is given in the *Kāmīkāgama* which runs as follows. "O Goddess, be pleased to reside in this shrine, so long as the sun, moon and the earth lasts."

Yāvat candras ca Sūryas ca
Yāvat tishṭhati medini
Tāvat atra tvayā Devi
Sthātavyam iha mandire[1]

(*Kāmika* II 44 86-96).

Kalyāna Karma

Another important aspect of this Gauri installation is also worth recording. The *Raurava*, *Kāmika*, *Virāgama* and *Suprabhedāgama* prescribe the performance of marriage rites to the image as per *Vivāha vidhi*. The *Rauravāgama* simply enjoins *Kalyāṇa*, according to marriage rites.

Kalyānam Kāravet dhīmān
vivāha vidhi mārgatah

(Kriya 31-47)[2]

The Kāmika also states that 'then marriage rites are to be performed' but it also gives another interesting information that if the image is to be worshipped as the principal deity (and not as a secondary to Siva) then the marriage rite should not be performed.

Tatah Kalyāna Karma syāt Caturte Karmavit tatah
Devyas svayam pradhānayas Sahajāyās ca Varjayet

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1. Kamikagama—II 44 : 86-96.
2. Rauravagama—Kriya—36 : 295-300.

Karma Vaivāhikam Viprah Prateshṭaivam Samirita

The *Amsumadbheda* gives however the complete marriage rites. Umā and Rudra should be placed in the pavilion (It does not specify whether it means processional images, vessels or what other symbols would stand for the two deities). They should be beautifully decorated with garments and ornaments. The Ācārya should consider himself as Brahma and arrange for the fire offerings. Vishnu should be invoked, Umā should be made to stand to the left of Siva and Vishnu should give Uma in marriage by pouring water. She should be given in the right hand of Siva with the *Bīja mantra*. On the left should be placed, a stone, with *Gauri Gāyatri* hymn, Siva should hold the foot of Devi and place it on the stone. Then *lāja homa* is to be performed with *Siva mantra*. In the *Vīrāgama* also this rite is detailed.

This marriage of Siva Sakti seems to constitute an important concept that Sakti and Siva remain ever united in the Siva temple. But when the Devi is worshipped as a Primordeal deity, how this concept is given effect to is not known for the marriage rite is prohibited in such instances.

It is to be mentioned here that among the existing structures in Tamil country, separate shrines for Gauri comes into existence only from the end of the 11th century A.D. However two temples, purely dedicated to Gauri were in existence even before the 10th century A.D. and they are the Kanyakumari temple at Kanyakumari and the Kamākshi temple at Kanchi. The Chola inscriptions testify to the existence of these temples prior to that period. Both these temples have Gauri as the main deity *Pradhana Devata*; though at Kanchi, she is considered the consort of Ekambaresvara. In such cases these āgamic references would be valid and may be taken to refer to an earlier tradition. But in Siva temples separate shrines for Devi have not come into existence. In such cases it is not clear whether these Āgamic codes have been abandoned or these parts of the Āgamas are posterior to the 11th century.

Sakti Pratimas

The Āgamas deal with Saktis under *pratimas* and their installation. These may be broadly divided into two aspects. 1) Saktis portrayed as consorts of Siva and 2) Sakti in her independent manifestations as Durga, Kāli, Saptamātas etc.

Of many forms of Siva the number varying from text to text, some are accompanied by Devi and others not. In most cases where she accompanies Siva, she is shown with two arms standing, holding *Kaṭaka mudra* in her right arm or *Utpala* flower while her left is shown hanging. Where Siva is shown seated as Somaskanda image, she is also seated, sometimes resting her left arm on the pedestal. In the case of Ālingana Candrasekhara form, also called Pradoshamurti, Siva is shown embracing Gauri. In case of Gauriprasāda, Siva is shown trying to appease her anger. In the case of Gayasamhāra murti, She is to be portrayed shivering and exhibiting her fear and at the same time carrying the child in her arm. The Rauravāgama states that Devi should be portrayed standing by the side of Nrittamurti Siva, holding the child in her hand.

It is of interest to note that in all the āgamas, Tripurāntaka images are said to be accompanied by the Devi. From literature and philosophy of the period, we find Devi as Tripura Bhairavi occupying a pre-eminant position. But in none of the Āgamas so far published do we come across the term Tripura Bhairavi applied to the Devi accompanying Tripurāntaka.

In some representations of Siva like Dakshiṇamūrti, Bhikshāṭana etc., Devi is not to be portrayed.

Saktidvaṭa

Of the independent manifestations of Devi, the *Ajitāgama* speaks of two forms of Sakti. She should be portrayed a young beautiful damsel with prominent breasts and parts. She should be portrayed with four arms, carrying *sūla*, *pāsa*, *patāka* and *kaṭaka mudras*. She should be either standing or seated on a lotus pedestal. The second form of Sakti would be a two armed Devi standing or seated, wearing *Karanḍamakuṭa*; she will carry *Kaṭaka mudra* in the right arm and the left arm would be placed on the thigh or on the seat. The left leg would be slightly bent and the right extended.

Saktirupadvayam[1]

वद्धचण्डातकं चैव प्रोद्भिन्न नवयौवनम्
पीनोन्नतकुचं चारु विशालजघन स्थलम् ।
शूलं पाशं पताकं कटकामुखमेव च
दक्षिण इतरयोः चैव हस्तयोः परिकल्पयेत् ।
आसीनं सुस्थितं चापि पङ्कजासन मध्यमे
अथवा अन्यप्रकारेण तदीयं रूपं उच्यते ।
एक वक्रं प्रसन्नास्यं करण्डमकुटान्वितं
द्विनेत्रं द्विभुजं चैव श्यामपीत निभं तथा ।
तदीयं दक्षिण हस्तं कटकामुखं उच्यते
वामपाणितलं चापि कारयेत् विष्टराश्रितं ।
कुञ्चितं वामपादं दक्षिणं स्यात् विलम्बितं
अथ वामोरु विन्यस्तं अस्य वामकरं स्थितं ।
पूर्ववत् दक्षिणं हस्तं सवभिरण भूषित्तं
एवं शक्ति द्विरूपं स्यात् । Ajita-Kriya-36 295-300

The *Suprebheda* refers to four armed Devi, holding *utpala* flower and *akshamāla* in the upper arms and *varada* and *abhaya* in the lower arms.[2] (Ajita II pp. 50 footnote).

Gauri Pratishṭā

The *Isana Sivagurudeva Paddhati*,[3] has a full chapter on *Gauri Pratishṭā*. It gives the Gauri Gāyatri as

"*Aum Kāmāyai ca Vidmahe Mālinyai ca dhīmahī*
Tanno Gaurī Pracodayāt".

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1. Ajitagama—Kriya—36 : 295—300.
2. *Ibid.* II. Page 50. Foot Note.
3. Esana sivaguru dava Paddhati—Ed. by Ganapa L. Sastri. Trivandram.

This is at variance with the other *Gāyatri*, mentioned earlier. According to this text, Gauri is four armed holding *Pāsa*, *Ankusa*, *Abhaya* and *Varada.*

The following are the *toranas* that would adorn the four directions of the *mandapa.*

1. *Bhadrā*
2. *Vijayā*
3. *Vijrmbha* and
4. *Lohitā.*

The eight entrance vessels, *dvāra kumbhas* are :

1. *Jayā*
2. *Vijayā*
3. *Ajitā*
4. *Aparājitā*
5. *Nityā*
6. *Vilāsinī*
7. *Sauṇḍī* and
8. *Aghorā.*

The following deiṭies are shown in the flags, two on each side

1. *Kundā*
2. *Kumudā*
3. *Vidyunmālā*
4. *Vibhūshaṇā*
5. *Kalushā*
6. *Ghoshani*
7. *Karālī*
8. *Vikrtā.*

In the central vessel, Gaurī is invoked as seated on bull *Vrshārūḍhā.* Gaurī is called Mononmaṇī. As Vrshārūḍa, she is four armed, holding *sūla, tanka, abhaya* and *varada.*

As mentioned earlier, when the image is brought for installation it is placed on five spreads. These five spreads represent the five elements.

Mandape atha tato vedyam
Sayane pancadhāstrte
Panca Bhūtātmake dēvīm
Sāyayitvā abhi pāyayet

The installatary rites are the same. In invoking various powers in the image, Sarasvati is to be invoked in the heart, Sāvitri and Gāyatri in the breasts. The Devi is said to have eight secondary deities. They are :

1. *Anangarūpā*
2. *Anangamadanā*
3. *Madanāturā*
4. *Pavanavegā*
5. *Bhuvanapālikā*
6. *Sarvasisirā*
7. *Anangavedunā* and
8. *Ananga mekhalā.*

The Vrshabha bull, is said to be the vehicle of Gaurī. Seven mothers with Vīra and Ganesa, Skanda, Sāsta and Candra are *parishadevatas* of Gauri. This text gives ten *mudrās* which are called *Gauri mudrās.*

1. *Āvāhini*
2. *Sthāpini*
3. *Nishṭurā*
4. *Kshōbhini*
5. *Mōhini*
6. *Drāvinī*
7. *Karshani*
8. *Sannidhāpini*
9. *Vandini*
10. *Mahāmudra.*

In the gopura entrance *Trisūlini* and *Khadgini* are the deities. In the second circle, eight *Gananāyikās* are invoked. They are :

1. *Karāli*
2. *Vikarāli*
3. *Ugrā*
4. *Vāni*
5. *Sacī*
6. *Mōhinī*
7. *Māyā* and
8. *Mahālakshmi.*

The *Gaurisena* army of Gauri are eight in number. They are :

1. *Riddhi*
2. *Smrti*
3. *Dhriti*
4. *Sraddhā*
5. *Medha*
6. *Kānti*
7. *Mati*
8. *Sruti.*

The Bull is the vehicle and the flag of Gauri. In each of the eight directions, 12 *Senānāyikas* (called *Pārshad nāyikās*) are worshipped. Since the list is incomplete we are not listing them here.

Durga

Durga is one of the most important aspect of Sakti, worshipped independently as well as one of the *Parivāradevatas,* in Siva temples.

Apart from the legends in the various Purānas, some of the Āgamas too, give the story connected with the origin of Durga. In *Ajita āgama,* Siva himself narrates the origin of the Goddess. "Once I called my consort by the name of Kāli. She was offended by my address as Kāli. All my efforts to pacify her went in vain. I tried to give her a beautiful colour but she refused to accept that, but wanted to attain it by her own penance and started doing penance. Brahma, at my bidding, gave her the desired request. Brahma addressed her, 'You, mother of the Universe, be pleased to take your form, leaving this colour as a *kosa* by your own power for the benefit of the worlds'. Devi did likewise and to the form that emanated, she gave her powers and weapons. She is called Durgā, Kausikī, Caṇḍi and Bhavāni".[1] The above account corresponds to the story in *Vāmanapurāna* (54-6-79).

'*Bam*' is said to be the *mulamantra* main chant to be pronounced with *bindu* and *nāda*. Two *Durgā Gayatris* are mentioned.

"*Aum Kātyāyanyāya Vidmahe*
Kanyakumāri dhīmahi
Tanno Durgi Pracōdayāt"

The above Gayatri is mentioned in the *Yogajāgama*; the *Kāranagama*[2] gives another version of *Durgā Gāyatri*, which reads as

"*Aum Simhadhvajāyai ca Vidhmahē Cakra hastāyai*
Dhīmahi Tanno Durgā Pracodayāt"

Ajitāgama gives a third version of *Durgā Gāyatri* as

"*Aum Kanyārūpāyai ca Vidhmahe Sūla hastāyai ca*
dhīmahi, Tanno Durgā pracodayāt"

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[1] Rauravagama—Kriyapata—35 : 2-10.

[2] Karanagama—I 98 : 38.

Durga is installed as an independent main deity, *Pradhāna Devata* in separate temples or as a secondary deity *Parivāradevatā* in other temples. As an independent deity Durga can be installed in villages, wherever linga can be installed, says the *Rauravāgama.*

The temple dedicated to Durgā will bestow pleasures (*Bhukti*) or victory if it faces east and *mukti* if it faces west. The temple should have the sanctum *garbhagraha* preceded by a *mandapa.* The sacrificial altars in front should be in the form of *Yoni* and *padma.*

In the *Svayampradhāna* temples, *Ulkhāmukhi* (boar head) and *Vijihva* are placed as *Dvāradevatas* (deities of the entrance). The lion is to be placed as her mount in front. She would be accompanied by eight *Parivāras*, who are as *Jyeshṭā, Bhūmi, Mōṭi, Mohini, Prakriti, Vikriti, Niyati* and *Nivritti.* There should be a *mahāpīṭha* adorned with *Pūtanas* outside[1].

Daily worship and festival are to be done thrice a day. The annual festivals are to be done for single, three, five or seven days, either in the month of *Krittika* or *Madhu* (*Āshāda*).

As a *Parivāradevata,* Durga is an invariable deity in Siva and Vishnu temples though her position varies in different texts. The *Dīpta, Yogaja* and *Vīrāgamas,* assign her to the south-east, while *Karana* assigns the south. *Rauravāgama* prescribes north as her quarters.

Installation of Durga Image

In the installation of Durga, the following parts are prescribed in *Ajitāgama.* First is mentioned the rite of eye opening. The carving of the eyes (called opening of the eyes) is a special rite. The sculpture is placed in a pavilion; rice is spread and the sculpture is placed over that standing, facing east. The sculptor will carve the eyes. First he will draw the lines with a golden needle. Three eyes are thus marked. In the right eye honey is applied, and in the left milk, while for the third eye also honey is applied. *Sūrya, Candra* and *Agni mantras* are uttered for the respective eyes. (right eye—Sūrya; left eye—Candra; and the third eye—Agni). Then the eyes should be carved and shown to Brahmins accompanied by the Durga Gayatri. Then it should be cleaned with *panca gavya* and *Panca mṛt* (five earth). Then it should be anointed with fragrant water.

The next rite is the placing of the sculpture in water for some days. This rite is called *Jalādhivāsa.* After taking the image in procession around the village, it is placed either in the river water or in a water tub for one, three, five or seven nights. The water vessels representing Vidyesas are placed near the water source.

The third rite is 'allowing the image to lie on a spread of paddy and five blankets'. This is done in a *mandapa* where five blankets are spread over a spread of paddy. Over this the sculpture is layed. Eight *Kalasas* are placed around the sculpture, beginning from the east, representing Vāma and the other Saktis. The *Vardhani* vessel, representing Manonmani, is placed by the side of the sculpture in the

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[1] Ajita—Kriya Chapter 32.

North-eastern direction. The *Kāranāgama* and *Svāyambhuva āgama*, state that the image should be beautified with garments and ornaments.[1]

With reference to the placing of vessels, the *Kāranāgama* prescribes the following. To the right of the image the main vessel (*vardhani*) should be placed. Nine vessels representing *Durgā*, *Kātyāyani*, *Vijayā*, *Aparājita*, *Devi*, *Vēgavati*, *Gāyatri*, *Sarvarī* and *Gāndhari* are placed around. According to the *Suprabhadagama* the *dikpalas* directional deities are to be invoked instead of Saktis.[2]

The next rite is the oblation in fire (*homa*) with twigs, ghee, food, cornflake, and honey with *Durga bīja mantra*. The *Kāranāgama* calls the fire as *Devi agni* and *states* that the *Pūrnāhuti* should be done with *Dēvi Gāyatri*.[3] The next rite is the *Kumbhābhishēka*, (installation) which is done as per rites for other deities, except with this difference that the *mantras* are appropriate to the Devi.[4]

Vaishnava Texts on Durga

Durga is a parivaradevata in not only Siva temples but also in Vaishnavite temples. She is described as a deity in the third *āvarana* (circle) according to the *Marīchi Samhita*.[5] To the north of the eastern entrance, is to be worshipped Durga, black in colour, clad in white silken garment, eight or four armed holding *Sankha*, *Cakra* and other weapons. She is to be beautified with all ornaments and a breast band. She was born in *Krithikā nakshatra*. Her sound is like a resonant bell. Her mount and standard are lion. She is to be worshipped as *Durgā*, *Kātyāyanī*, *Vaishnavī* and *Vindhyāvasini*.

प्राग्द्वारात् उत्तरे श्यामवर्णा सिताम्बरधरा
अष्टभुजा चतुर्भुजा वा शंखचक्रधरा
सर्वाभरण संयुक्ता कक्ष्यावद्ध घनस्तनी कृत्तिकोदभ्वा
घण्टाखा नामाद्यक्षर वीजा सिंह ध्वज वाहना
दुर्गा ! दुर्गां कात्यायनीं वैष्णवीं विन्ध्यवासिनीं इति । p. 123

The *Bhṛigu Samhita*[6] has a separate chapter on Durgā –*Durga Kalpa*. The *Bhṛigu Samhita* belongs to the Vaikhānasa school of the Vaishnavite branch. Its date is not certain but should be considered an early text which could be assigned to the mediaeval period. The *Durgā kalpa* of this text is more elaborate than any of the sections available even in the Saiva tantras. In 235 verses, *Durgāmahima*, *Bimbamāna*, *Parivāra*, *Bālālaya*, *Pratishṭākrama*, *Nityakrama*, *Utsava* etc. are given in detail.

Icca Sakti of Narayana

Durgā is called the very *Vaishnavī māyā* and *Yoganidra*. She is the subtle Sakti and Prakriti. She is also the embodiment of Vedas, *Trayimayi*. She took the form of Durga for the protection of the world. When Nārāyana protects this universe, his *Iccā*

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1. Karanagama—I 98 : 20-22.; Svayabhuva—52 : 12-14.
2. Subrabhadagama.—I 46: 6-7.
3. Karanagama.—I 98: 31-36.
4. Ajitagama—II Chapter 53.
5. Marichi Samhita—Madras. 1926. Page 123.
6. Bhrgusamhita—Tripati.

Sakti takes this Durga form. Durgā by her own will is born in the universe for its protection.

It is interesting to note that in this text Durga is considered the *Iccā Sakti* of Bhagvān Nārāyaṇa

> "*Yathā Nārāyanah Sarvān Sadeva asura mānavāni*
> *Lokān nityam pālayate Bhagavān*
> *nirvahan sthithim Tathā tatsaktih*
> *īsāna Tadicchā Klpta Vigraha*"

Durga is to be worshipped for obtaining the desired effects not only here but also in the other world. Brahmins can worship her for attaining Brahminhood *Brahmavriddhi.* Kshatriyas can worship her for conquering their enemies. Since she is the *Vaishnavi Sakti*, she would bestow the fruits undoubtedly. She can be installed in Villages, Towns, *Pattanas*, by the side of mountains, on the banks rivers, or lakes. She can be worshipped by the kings in their palaces.

Before erecting a temple, this text prescribes the erection of a separate *bālālaya* for her. The image for this *bālālaya* may be made of either copper or wood. She is to be four armed, holding Sankha and Cakra in the rear arms and holding her front arms in *anjali*. For the *bālālaya* the attendent deities are also to be provided and worshipped.

The main image of Durgā can be made either with four arms or eight arms. The four armed image is called the *Saumyamurti* (the benign form); *Sankha and Cakra* will be in the rear arms while the front arms will be in *anjali hasta*. It is not known why the text prescribes *anjali hasta* for the image. We do have Kāli images with anjali hasta when she is portrayed with Siva doing the *tāṇḍava* dance, but for Durga this seems to be a peculiar pose. So far we have not noticed any Durga image in Vishnu or Siva temple, with *anjali hasta*.

Durga is to be portrayed with eight arms if she is to be propitiated for victory over enemies, in which form she would carry *sakti*, bow, sword, discus, arrow, shaft, pestle and shield. She would be portrayed with a terrific countenance, standing with her right leg placed on the head of buffaloe and the left slightly bent. We have an image of Durgā, in Mahabalipuram in a Vishnu Temple (the Ādivarāha temple) where she stands with eight arms, but with the left on the head of Mahisha and the right slightly bent.

The *Bhṛigu Samhita* states that Durga can be installed in the village in the northern direction with attendent deities. On either side of the Devi are to be shown two women attendents, called *Vinda* and *Pushṭi* bearing chouris. *Yakshas* and *Gandharvas* are to be shown as *Paricārakas*. In the wall to the right of the image, should be portrayed *Padma* with a lotus in her hand and Umā holding a garland of flowers in her left (probably in the left wall). Sages Āngiras and Mrgaṇḍu should be shown adoring the Goddess with flowers in their arms. In the inner entrance *antardvāra* are to be shown Nandagopa and Yasoda. (Since *Vishnumāyā* was once the daughter of them). Gangā and Yamunā are the first *dvārapālikas* while Aditi and Diti would be the second *dvārapālikas*.

The rites of installation, as detailed in the text is almost the same prescribed in Saiva Āgamas discussed early except for this difference that the *Vishnusūkta* hymn plays a prominent role here. Further, *Durgā sūkta* beginning with "*Jātavēdase sunavāma......*" is given prominence here instead of *Durgā Gāyatri.*

Vaishnava Rites of Durga

As mentioned earlier, this text is interesting as it gives the daily rites connected with *Durgā pūja*. The priest should enter the temple uttering the mantra *Jātavēdase sunavāma*; circumambulate the temple; offer salutations to *dvārapālikas* and then open the door and do *namaskar* to the Devi. The bell should be rung and the *nirmalyas* cleared Nirmālyadhārini should be propitiated, (*Isāna Sivaguru deva paddhati* gives the name of Nirmālyadhārini as Simhika) with the address :

> "*Jayam ca sukhadam ānanda bhogadāyini*"

Then the area should be cleaned and the *punca suddhis* (five purificatory rites like *bhūta suddhi, Ātma suddhi, dravya suddhi, bimba suddhi* and *mantra suddhi*) performed. Then the goddess is invoked with the verse

> "*Āyātu Bhagavati Devi, dhvajinī hamsa* (*simha*)
> *Vāhinī Senāvarūdhinī Durge*"

Then the following worships are offered with appropriate mantras, *āvāhana, anumati, pādya, ācamanīvam pushpa, gandha, dhūpa, dīpa, arghya, ācamanīya, snapana, Vimrja* (drying) *Vastra, uttarīya, ābharana, pādya, ācamana, pushpa, gandha, anjana, ādarsa*, followed by *dhūpa, dīpa, havis* and then *bali* is to be offered. This process of daily worship is identical to all the deities, except that the *mantras* vary according to the deity for example the text gives the following hymn for Durga.

> "*Durgām Kātyāyanīm cētē*
> *Vaishnavīm Vindhyavāsinīm*"

The attendent deities like Ramā, Umā, Nandagopa, Yasoda, Gangā, Yamunā, Jayā, Vijayā and the lion are to be worshipped. The text also gives a third set of *dvārapālas*, whose names are given as *Ugrasena* and *Jayanta*. *Ugrasenā* will hold trident and *Jayanta* will hold club. They are called *Yakshamukyas*. Another important person to be worshipped is *Kumbodara*, the pot bellied and short, *bhūta* who is described as a *Durgabhakta* (great devotee of Durgā).

The text says the *Yajamāna* should perform *Sāntika* and *Paushṭika* worships only and should not permit *ābhicārika* worship. But in case the ruler wants the *ābhicarika* worship for gaining victory, it should be done along with *Sāntika* and *Paushṭika* worship, only.

Festivals to Durgā are to be performed at the end of first installation ceremony, on the natal star of the ruler, in times auspicious occasions and when faced with great calamities. Festivals are also performed on *Durgā pancamis*. The festivals are to be performed for one, two, three, five, seven and nine days. The festivals are begun with flag hoisting ceremony. The flag will have the figure of a lion topped by a parasol and flanked by chouris. The flag is duly worshipped. The priest will go round the village and offer *bali* to the directional deities and with due festivities and hoist the flag.

The festival *mahotsava* of Durgā is performed, as for other deities. It is of interest to not such a detailed description of *Durgā pūja* described in a Vaishnava text of the South. It must be admitted that after 11th century, Vaishnavism took a purely sectarian garb and slowly jettisioned the rites connected with the Saivite faith. While the followers of the *Vaikhānasa* school continued to have a tolerent outlook, the *Pāncarātra* sect followed a millitant path. In many of the temples, following *Vaikhānasa* tradition, one could see even today worship offered to Durgā; It has gone out of vogue in temples controlled by *Pāncarātra* cult. However we must admit even Pāncarātra Āgamas do deal with worship of Durgā for example *Visvaksenasamhita* gives the worship of Durgā with four or eight arms.[1] Dr. Smith has also drawn our attention to an image of Arya seated, four armed, holding Sankha, Chakra, bow and *abhaya* and by a deer.

Paddhatis on Durga

We will discuss elsewhere, the role of a group of literature called *Paddhatis*, in temple rituals. Here we deal with the worship of Durgā as given in one of the Paddhatis. A long chapter is devoted to the installation and worship of Durga in *Īsānasiva Gurudeva paddhati* a work by Isāna Siva (chapter 55). We will only note the salient feature, given in this excellant work.

The *Durgā mantra* is said to consist of nine syllables. The *Durgā Gāyatri* according to this text.

"*Kātyāyanyaya Vidhmahe, Kanyakumāri dhīmahi,*
Tanno durgī pracodayāt".

The following five vedic mantras constitute what is called *Durgāpancami.*

1. *Jātavēdase*..................
2. *Tām agnivarnām*..................
3. *Agne tvām*.........
4. *Visvam*............

These are called *mantra adhvas*, the mantric path.

Devi is portrayed with four, eight or sixteen arms. She may either be seated on a *simhāsana* or stand on the head of *mahishā* or she may be shown on a lion. If shown with four arms, she should hold conch, discus, *varada* and *abhaya.* If with eight arms, she would hold in the left *tarjanī*, bow, shield and conch and in the right trident, arrow, sword, and discus. If shown with sixteen arms, she would hold in the left arms *kapāla, ankusa, gada, satagni, parasu,* bow, shield and conch. The eight arms will bear *sūla, pāsa,* fire, *vajra, tomara,* arrow, sword and discus. The image must be made to the *madhyama dasatāla* measurement.

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[1] **Vaishnava Iconography. by H. Danial Smith. Madras-1960. Page 267.**

For installation, a separate pavilion should be erected. Four toranas should be erected on all the four sides. In the *toranas* are to be consecrated four *Vedas* and *Yanjēśa*, *Prabhakara*, *Mangala* and *Subhadra*. Inside the four *toranas*, two flags on each side should be placed. The presiding deities of these flags are *Kunda*, *Kumuda*, *Vidyunmāla*, *Bhīshana*, *Kalushi*, *Ghoshani*, *Karali* and *Vikriti*. They will have conch and other emblems drawn on them. In the eight vessels Kāli, Karāli, Viraja, Mandara, Vindhyavāsini, Suprabha, Simhavakra, and Daityadamani, each holding a sword and shield, are to be worshipped. In the central vessel (*vardhani*) is to be worshipped Sivā as Simhavāhini.

The installation rites are similar to other deities. The *Kriya Sakti* is to be invoked in the *pītha* and *Jnānasakti* in the image. The Ācarya should meditate the *chinmayī sakti*, in his *Kundalini* and raise the same through his *Brahmanāḍi* (a nerve in the body) and raise to the padma centre in him, and meditate this as a light of Sakti which he should transfer to the heart of the image. Then the image should be anointed with the auspicious waters of the vessels.

Jayā and Vijayā are the *Dvarapālikas* and Gangā and Yamunā are the *dvarasrī*. The following are considered the eight *dvarapalikas*. Jaya and Vijaya in the east; Raudri and Bhīshani in the South; Sulini and Prabha in the West; and Aparājita and Jayanti in the north. These are considered Virgins carrying sword and shield. Lokapalas, Simha (also called Mahāsimha) the seven mothers with Vira and Ganesa, Sasta, Skanda and moon are the Durgaparishadas (attendent deities). Simhika is the *nirmālya dhārini* (the receiver of *nirmālya*). At the entrance of the Gopura, on the innerside are Hradini and Madini and on the outerside Katyayani and Canda.

In the second circle eight Goddesses are propitiated. They are *Kāli*, *Karāli*, *Viraja*, *Mandara*, *Vindhyavasini*, *Suprabha*, *Simhavaktra* and *Daityamardini*. The Durgasena consists of eight who are listed as

1. *Brahmaghoshā*
2. *Sughoshā*
3. *Kumari*
4. *Varavarnini*
5. *Āryā*
6. *Hemavarnā*
7. *Krittika and*
8. *Abhayaprada.*

In each of the eight directions, eight *Kanyakas* (total 64) are to be propitiated as *Gananāyikas*.

EAST :

1. *Saumyā*
2. *Bhadrā*
3. *Jayā*
4. *Nandā*
5. *Kundā*
6. *Kumudā*
7. *Dyuti*
8. *Vidyunmāla*

S. EAST :

1. *Mahābalā*
2. *Balā*
3. *Subalā*
4. *Balā*
5. *Abalā*
6. *Bhīshanā*
7. *Ratī*
8. *Kalushā.*

SOUTH

1. *Ghoshani*
2. *Nandani*
3. *Smrthi*
4. *Yuddhapriya*
5. *Devasiddhaptauji*
6. *Vikrti*
7. *Kriti*
8. *Mahasuravimardini*

WEST

1. *Hrādini*
2. *Kshemakārika*
3. *Āryā*
4. *Bhadrā*
5. *Bhaḍrakāli*
6. *Varuni*
7. *Amrtā*
8. *Ambika*

NORTH

1. *Riddhi*
2. *Lakshmi*
3. *Tushṭi*
4. *Pushṭi*
5. *Kirti*
6. *Dhanesvari*
7. *Arbhuda*
8. *Madā*

S. WEST

1. *Vikarati*
2. *Palini*
3. *Sūlakātyāyani*
4. *Mahayogesvari*
5. *Gauri*
6. *Kanda*
7. *Canda*
8. *Khadgini.*

N. WEST

1. *Kshemyā*
2. *Vedagarbhā*
3. *Anantā*
4. *Sarvanishkala*
5. *Sānti*
6. *Bhairavi*
7. *Prānā*
8. *Cetanā.*

N. EAST

1. *Sruti*
2. *Smrti*
3. *Nīti*
4. *Bhimā*
5. *Brahmacārini*
6. *Nilāmbara*
7. *Sūlini*
8. *Saraswati.*

These sixty four attendents are called *Gananāyikas*. It is not known whether these are modelled out of 64 yoginis.

Sapta Matas

Isāna Sivagurudeva Paddhati deals in a separate chapter,[1] the installation of Saptamātas. As this is perhaps the only elaborate treatise we shall discuss this at some length. The text deals with only the seven mothers and has no reference to *ashtamātas*. The Saptamātas listed are

Brāhmi
Māhesvari
Kaumāri
Vaishnavī

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[1] **Esanasivaguru Paddati. Chapter 30.**

Vārāhi
Indrāni
Cāmuṇḍi

At the beginning is Vīrabhadra and at the end Ganesvara. Īsāna Siva states that he follows *Svaccanda Bhairava tantra* and *Mātritantra* in writing this chapter. Evidently the worship of Saptamātas were brought by the followers of Bhairava and Sākta cult.

The following mantras are given for each Goddess.

Brāhmi

Rgyajus Sāma atharva
Kamaṇḍalu Kūrcadhārini namo namah

Mahesvari

Devi, Parasudhārini, Svetarūpini
Maheśvari namo namah

Kaumari

Sakti dhārini, Mayuravāhini
Kukkuṭa dhvajinī kumkuma Varnini
kaumāri namo namah

Vaishnavi

Sankha Cakra Dhārini Garuḍa
Vāhini Vaishnavī namo namah

Vārāhi

Hala musala dhārini, damshtrini
Sukarmani Simhavāhini
Vārāhi namo namah

Indrani

Vajradhārini, Gajavāhini, syāma
Varnini namo namah

Cāmunda

Kapāladhārini, Nilāmbavarnini,
Pretavāhini, Humkārini, namo namah

Vīrabhadra

Vīrabhadrāya, Lakulisvarāya
Purushāya Rakshasutrāgnidhārine
Dhruvayapataye yogarūpāva
Vyāpine namo namah

Vighnesvara

Vighnesvarāya ghanādhipataye
Hastivaktrāya namo namah

These *mūlamantras* basic hymns are used when the seven mothers are grouped together; when there is only Cāmuṇḍa the following is the mantra.

Aum namo Bhagavati Trinētre
Kāli Kālavarnini Ashṭabhuja
Sūlakapāla dhārini Preta vāhini
Rudhirasneha sampūrna vaktre
Cāmuṇḍi namo namah

Swam, Bull, Peacock, Garuda, Lion, Elephant and deadbody are mentioned as the vehicles of the respective mothers and they are used in their respective flags also. Dharbha grass, trident, Sakti, discus, plough, *vajra* and *kapāla* are described as their respective emblems. The Gāyatri for the respective hymns are formed with the names of vehicles and flags, for example for Brāhmi

Hamsa Vāhinyai ca Vidhmahe
Kūrca hastāyai ca Dhīmahi
Tanno Brāhmi pracodayāt.

For Vīrabhadra the following is the *Gāyatri*

Lakulisvarāya Vidhmahe
Akshamālādharāya dhimahi
Tanno Vīrabhadrah pracodayāt

For Ganapati

Ekadantāya Vidmahe
Hasti vaktrāya dhīmahi
Tanno Ganapathi pracodayāt

It may be seen all these Gayatri's are specially composed with none of them going back to remote antiquity as *Durgā Gāyatri* etc.

The images of mothers should correspond to the male counterparts. If installed with the group Cāmunda will have four arms, holding *Sūla*, Sword and *Kapāla* and *Pāsa.* In place of sūla or sword she may hold *damaruka* as well. If she is represented alone She is to be shown with eight arms holding *kapāla*, shield, bell and snake in the left while in the right would hold, Sūla, sword, *vetāla* and *damaruka.* She should be shown fierce and seated on *preta āsana.* Her locks of hairs flowing like glowing fire. The right leg placed firmly on the seat and with the left she is shown trampling on Dārukāsura. She must be accompanied by *Bhūta, Preta, Pisāca, Hākini, Dākini,* and *Yoginis* and also fighters. She is Cāmuṇḍa.

The temple must be rectangular in shape and may face either east or north. For snitallation of Saptamātas, a special *mandapa* must be erected and on all the four sides *toranas* should be provided. These *toranas* are *Pramodani, Abhaya, Sānti* and *Subhada.*

Each torana entrance is presided over by *Kumbhi, Nikumbhi, Vajrābhishāna* and *Mangini.* The entrances have two vessels each and their names are

1. *Dūtikā*
2. *Pālinā*
3. *Daṇḍinī*
4. *Bhavahastaka*
5. *Pāsinī*
6. *Varunī*
7. *Sankhinī* and
8. *Padminī.*

The flags of the respective Saptamātas and Vīra and Ganesa are provided. If Cāmuṇḍa is represented alone, the flag will have the figure of a *Paisaca* drawn out.

Two vessels are to be placed in the middle; one is the main vessel in which Cāmuṇḍo, seated on *Paisāca* is to be worshipped. The other vessel is *Vardhani,* the weapon seated on lion and in the form of a woman is worshipped. It should have *Trisūla,* as its head and holding *Kapāla* and sword. Around it are to be made the nine vessels. The central vessel would be Cāmunda and the rest would represent Brāhmi and other beginning from the east. Fire offering to be made in each altar, uttering the respective mantras.

The eye opening of the image should be performed after taking in procession around the village for *Pratishṭhā* installation the image is brought to the mandapa. A central spread surrounded by eight spreads are to be prepared and the images placed on them with Cāmuṇḍa in the centre. If Cāmuṇḍa is to be installed alone, she should be placed in the centre on five spreads. To the north of each image a vessel is to be placed. Inside each, the respective Vahana and weapons made or drawn in gold are to be placed. Virabhadra's vessel should be in the west and Ganesa's in the North east. The vessel should be covered with a lid after placing *Kūrcas* (darbha grass) in them. In each Kumbha the respective Gāyatri is to be invoked and worshipped. Outside the Vedi (Pedestal) are to be placed the eight attendent *ghatas* representing *Aindri, Āgneyi, Yami, Nairrti, Vāruni, Vāyavi, Kauberi* and *Īsāni.* They are to be meditated with four arms, holding *sūla* and *pāsa* in their upper arms and holding the lower arms in *anjalihasta.* They are to be accompanied by their respective consorts. Another *ghata* is to be placed for the installation of the *balipītha.* In this is worshipped *ugrasena* with a terrific countenance black in colour holding a sword in her right arm and placing her left on her thigh.

For performing fire offerings the following *mantras* are prescribed.

Brāhmī	*Brahmaja Jnānam . . .*
Māhesvari	*Trayambakam Yajāmohe . . .*
Kaumāri	*Ayam Kumarat . . .*
Vaishnavi	*Yotteyam . . .*
Varāhi	*Idam Vishnu . . .*
Indrāni	*Svasti na Indro . . .*
Cāmuṇḍa	*Isatas . . .*
Gānapati	*Gananām tva . . .*

The *mantra* portion for Vīrabhadra is lost.

Eight vessels are to placed around Cāmunda and in each the following are to be worshipped. Bhavāni, Sarvāni, *Urgā*, *Pasupati*, *Sankari*, *Sasini*, *Bhīmā* and *Rudrāni*. In the central altar Cāmuṇḍa is to be invoked and oblation performed. Like wise in the respective directions, Tatpurusha, Aghora, Vāmadeva and Sadyōjāta are to be worshipped. In the fire, a cake made of *māsha* grain is to be offered. This is a substitute for goat's flesh. (Evidently flesh was offered originally in such sacrifices). The final *āhuti* is to be performed in *agni* and *bali* is to be offered for the *bhūtas*. The *bali* consists of cooked rice mixed with seasame jaggery, ghee, and red colour. This is again a substitute for flesh *mamsa*. Kshetrapāla, Pisācas, Pretas, Rākshasas, Nāgas, Asuras, Yaksha and Gandharvas are offered *bali*, starting from eastern directions. In the upper region Bhūtas and in the lower region are water deities receiving offerings.

Having performed this offering, seven virgins and one Brāhmana are to be fed with delicious food. Then Brahmins, lingins and women and other *mātribhaktas* (devotees of the mothers) are to be fed. That night should be spent in dance, music etc.

The next day, after doing preliminary worship to the images the *āchārya* would place the respective pedestals over the turtle stone *Kurmasila*, inside the sanctum. If Cāmunda is to be installed alone, her pedestal alone is to be placed. In them, five precious gems, plaques bearing the figures of the respective mounts and weapons made of gold are to be placed. While placing them, the respective *bījas* of the mothers are to be invoked. To the accompaniment of Vedic chanting, music, dance etc., the images are to be circumambulated and taken inside the sanctum and the images are set in position with their respective mantras. Brahmi to Cāmunda are to be placed in one line beginning from east. In the east should be Vīrabhadra and the west Ganapati.

From the respective *Kumbhas*, the respective *bījas* are to be transfered to the heart of the respective images. Then the Ācarya performs the psychic transference of Parāsakti from *Mūlādhāra* to the image. The process as described is as follows.

The guru should invoke the subtle Parāsakti, who is *chinmātra*, manifesting in his *Kundalini* lotus. She is the creator of *Vidyutlekha*. The Ācārya should raise her through his nerve centres, to *Sahasrapadmā*, where she would manifest herself as *Bindu*, *Nāda*, *Kalā*, *Amrta* and *rasa* and transfer her to the heart of the image. In describing *Parāsakti* thus being transfered, Īsāna Siva reaches poetic height

ततो गुरुः स्वमूलाज कुण्डलिन्याः समुदग्तां
परां शक्ति सूक्ष्मरूपां विद्युल्लेखानुकारिनीं
नाडीमार्गेन नीत्वा उन्ध्वं हृद्विन्दु द्वादशान्मकां
तद्वयोम पद्ममध्येन्दु कलामृत रसाल्पुतां
चिन्मात्रायाः तु तत् शक्तया
        नीत्वा ऐक्यं बीजं उच्चरन्
हंस संपुट मध्यस्थां
        नादान्तस्वर भूषितां
आनीय नाडीमार्गेन देव्याः हृत् पंङ्कजे न्यसेत्—I.S.P. Kriya. 59, 85. 89.

After performing *pūjas*, the attendant deities are to be installed in their respective directions and from the *kumbhas* like *Aindri* etc. consecration is to be performed. Similarly in the *balipītha*, *ugrasena* is to be consecrated.

For the Saptamāta temple, eight dvārapālas are listed. They are :

East : *Rakshōhana*
Vāhaghahana
South : *Sumukha*
Kāladanda
West : *Atithi*
Mudita
North : *Sakala* and
Suktikarna.

Each entrance is named as

East : *Pramōdani*
South : *Abhayā*
West : *Sānti* and
North : *Subhakari*.

On each side two female deitie are mentioned

East : *Karāli*
Kāmukā
South : *Subhagā*
Dāhini
West : *Gagana*
Hlādini
North : *Vishpulingi*
Virūpākshi.

The names of Matrsenas who reside in the lotus petals are

Sundari
Sākhini
Vishakanthi
Vasundhara
Yogini
Amrtapūrva
Ghataki and
Amrtapūrva.

These female deities are also called Yoginis.

Nityotsava daily festival is prescribed for Saptamātas when Bali is offered to the various deities of Matas. With the *bali bera* taken out in procession to the accompaniment of music, etc. the offerings are made to, *dvāradēvatas*, *Gopura devatas*, *Balipīthas* etc. standing at the *Balipitha*, the priest should utter 'Ye the attendants of the Mātas, residing in earth, heaven, and nether worlds, Yoginis, Sākini, Preṭas, Kaṭapūtas, Dākini's, Pisācās, Pramathas and all others be pleased to manifest here and partake this offering'

Balipīṭhasya puratah mantrena āmantrayet ganam
Yah samastham Jagadvyāpya Mātriparishadās sthitās
Yōginyas ape ca Sākinyas Prētās Katapūtanās
Dākinyas ca Pisācās ca
Vētālas Pramathās tathā
Pātāle Bhuvi ca ākāse
Yāsca yē va vasante tāh
Te ca suprītamanasā
Pratigrh hantu imām balim.

Going around the Yoginis are to be propitiated in the eastern direction; Sākini in the South east; Prētas in the south, Pūtanas in the South West, Dākinis in the west, Pisācas in the North West, vetālas in the North, and Bhūtas in the North east. Again coming back to the *balipiṭha*; ugrasena should be offered *Bali*.

Isānaguru discusses special festival to Saptamātas which he calls *Mahāsānti* the great *santi*. This is performed to remove disease, drought, epidemics and other calamities. It can be performed in any month, either in the bright or dark half of the month. From *dvityai* to *ashṭami*, seven days are to be chosen for this worship. Beginning from Tuesday the seven days are also to be chosen and each day is named after each Mata beginning from Brahmi. The *astra* (Sūla) should be brought to the mandapa and worshipped. To the accompaniment of music and dance, *pishtapasu* must be offered. We are not told what is *pishṭapasu*. Every morning and evening *Parasava* (a man of the Pārasava family) should sing and dance in front of the *astra*. In the middle of each night, *maunabali* should be offered.

On the sixth night, the great *pasu*, *mahāpasu* should be brought and worshipped. If the worship is arranged by Brahmin, the *mahāpasu* would be a stag; if by a king it would be an elephant; by a vaisya it would be a buffaloe and for others *Chagamrga* (   ). The festival to begin with the sprouting rite (*ankurārpanam*) followed by the hoisting of flag. In the flag is to be drawn the figure of *Paisāci* if the temple is dedicated only to Cāmunda. But if it is dedicated to Saptamātas, the mounts of the seven respective mothers should be drawn around the Paisāchi. The Paisāchi should be drawn as a skeletal figure with rounded eyes, protruding teeth, hanging lips, gawing mouth, long neck and *ūrdhvakesa*. In her two arms she would hold *kapāla* and *vetāla*.

A special mandapa should be erected in front of the temple for bath and other offerings. To the accompaniment of *Sūla*, *bali* is to be offered at the appropriate quarters of the village, city or town. The *bali* consists of cooked rice mixed with red colour, and sandal. This is a substitute for flesh *māmsa*. In addition to the offerings at the directions, bali should be offered in front of all. If these specified animals are not available buffaloe can be sacrificed by all.

In the afternoon of the seventh day *upapasu* (a goat) should be tied to the *yūpasthambhas*. Then the *Mahāpasu* should be cut and its blood should be offered to the mothers. The cooked rice mixed with its blood should be offered in all the directions.

The text is interesting in many ways. It prescribes stag, buffaloe and even elephant as sacrificial animal. So far no record has come to light about the sacrifice of elephant. That even Brahmins consented to the sacrifice of stag, shows the impact of this māta cult. Even to this day the sacrifice of buffaloe by all sections of the society is prevalent in remote parts of the villages though it is prohibited under the existing law. The text is not however clear whether the *upapasu*, the goat was also to be sacrificed with the main animal. The animal sacrifice is specified for the evening of the seventh day in the text. But in present practise, most of the buffaloe sacrifices are performed in midnights.

On the eight day, the worship should be conducted as per Saivāgama. This consist of *Tīrthayātra* i.e. taking the deity in procession to the water source and then the flag is lowered.

One interesting aspect of the Saptamāta cult as mentioned in this text, is that it is associated with the worship of Cāmuṇḍa. The text refers to Cāmuṇḍa, in this context and considers Her as the main deity *pradhāna devatā*. Even when the group of seven mothers are installed and worshipped the central deity of worship is Cāmuṇḍa. In the flag, in the *Kumbha* etc., we find the prominent position given to Cāmunda. It is in essence the worship of Cāmuṇḍa.

There is another point of interest that needs attention. Īsānaguru gives the worship of many deities like Saraswati, Gauri, Sāsta, Kshetrapāla etc. besides the main manifestations of Siva. For all these deities, when they are worshipped as *pradhāna devatas*, Saptamātas are mentioned invariably as *Parivāra devatas.*

VI

SILPA TEXTS

The great pioneer T.A. Gopinatha Rao has discussed in detail various representations of Devi, as given in the Āgama and Silpa texts in his "Elements of Hindu Iconography (Vol. I Pt. II. p. 327-400)". The veteran scholar J.N. Banerjee has similarly discussed the Devi cult. I have had occasion to peruse a good collection of manuscripts of Silpa texts with V. Ganapathi Sthapati, the Principal of the Sculpture Training Centre, Mamallapuram. He comes from a family of traditional Sthapathis and intends publishing these collections. Some of them have already been published while others are in manuscript stage. I am therefore not able to give reference to individual representations. All those listed here are from that collection.

It is difficult to discuss the date of these Silpa texts. Most of them have included later additions and were mainly used as manuals by the practising sthapatis. So we have *dhyānaslokas* of deities which are of recent origin. The silpa texts are sometimes found belonging to two different sects, as Vaishnava and Saiva. No separate text for the Sākta cult has survived. Most of the architectural treatises, like Mayamata, include chapters on iconography in which we get Devi representations. Some of these texts are of considerable antiquity. The Mayamata is referred to in Sangam works, but as it has come down to us it seems to preserve the 11th-12th century tradition.

In most of the silpa texts some forms of Devis are included. They generally give the complexion, colour of the garments, head dress, arms, the main emphasis being on the hands and the various emblems held in them. We have discussed a few significant representations of Devi here. It would be seen that we do not have *dhyāna slokas* for all the early representations as found in early Pallava and Chola period. We have included some modern illustrations in this study to compare them with the silpa text.

Durga

The Silpa texts speak of nine different manifestations of Durgās as Nava Durgā. The names of these nine Durgās vary according to texts. The main manuscript in the

Mahabalipuram collections gives the following nine names :

1. *Agni Durga.*
2. *Mahā Durgā.*
3. *Jala Durgā.*
4. *Brahma Durgā.*
5. *Vishṇu Durgā.*
6. *Rudra Durgā.*
7. *Vana Durgā.*
8. *Sthūla Durgā.*
   and
9. *Sūlini Durgā.*

The Sritatwanidhi gives the following nine names :

1. *Sailaputri Durgā.*
2. *Brahmacārini Durgā.*
3. *Candakānda Durgā.*
4. *Skanda Durga.*
5. *Kūshmanda Durgā.*
6. *Kāthyāyani Durga.*
7. *Kalarāthri Durga.*
8. *Mahā Gouri Durga.*
   and
9. *Siddidāyini Durga.*

Another manuscript (No. 3) gives Brahma Durgā, Vishnu Durgā, Rudra Durgā, Vīra Durgā, Mahishasura-mardini Durgā, Jaya Durgā, and Simha Durgā. The text is incomplete.

The following are the descriptions of the nine Durgas according to the main manuscript.

Agni Durga :	Devi holds in her right arms *chakra*, sword, arrow and *sūla*. The left arms carry conch, shield, bow and *kapāla*. She stands on the head of a buffaloe.
Mahā Durga :	She resembles lightning in colour, and is seated on lion. Holds *cakra*, sword, shield, bow, arrow, *pāsa* and *tarjani mudra* in her arms; has three eyes.
Jala Durga :	holds conch, sugarcane bow and arrow—three eyed; wears crescent moon on her *kirīṭamakuta*; seated on lion; adored by Devas and Siddhas.
Brahma Durga :	Yellow in colour, with four heads and four arms; holds *kendi*, *patāka*, *varada* and *akshamāla*; three eyed Devi.
Vishnu Durga :	holds *sanka* and *chakra* in the upper arms, *abhaya* and *kaṭi* in the lower arms; white in colour; stands on the head of Mahisha and is three eyed; Or holds *sanka* and *cakra*, bow, arrow, *sūla* and shield, *kapāla* and *tarjani mudra* in her arms; wears *kirīṭa makuṭa* and crescent moon on her head.
Vana Durga :	Black in colour. Wears *kunḍala* in ears and crescent moon on her head; holds *sanka*, *cakra*, sword and *anukusa* in her arms; seated on a lion.

The preserved manuscript gives the description of *dhyana slokas* only for the seven Durgas and for the rest the manuscript is incomplete.

The manuscript number 3., in the Mahabalipuram collection gives the following description of the Nava Durgas.

Brahma Durga :	Yellow in colour, two eyed, four arms holding *varada*, *abhaya*, *kamandalu* and *akshamāla*; is on a *padmapīṭha*; wears *jaṭāmakuṭa*. The temple for this deity should be circular in form with *bhadras* in the centre. The goddess is seated on a swan.
Vishnu Durga :	Black in colour, two eyed, four armed, holding *sankha*,, *cakra* and *abhaya*, *varada* in her arms; seated on a lion, carries a garuda standard; wears *kirīta makuṭa* and also stands on the head of a buffaloe.
Rudra Durga :	spotless white in colour, wears *jatā makuta* and tigers skin, four arms, holds *damaruka*, *nāga*, *abhaya* and *varada* in her arms.

Sri Tatvanidhi gives the following description.

Sailaputrī Durga :	Wears crescent moon seated on bull, holding *sūla*.
Brahmacārini Durga :	two armed, carries *akshamala* and *kamandalu*.
Candakanda Durga :	Seated on Garuda, wearing a terrific countenance.
Skanda Durga :	Seated on *Simhāsana*, two arms, holding lotus in both her arms.
Kūshmanda Durga :	Two arms, carrying pots in both her arms, one filled with liquor and the other filled with blood.
Katyāyani Durga :	Seated on a simha with a sword.
Kālarātri Durga :	Wears a terrific countenance and is blue lotus in colour.
Mahagouri Durga :	Seated on white elephant, wearing white saree; she gives pleasures to Mahādeva.
Siddidāyini Durga :	Devi adored by Siddhas, Gandarvas and Yakshas.

Another text of Sri Tatvanidhi gives the description of nine Durgas which are said to be in Skandayāmala text. One of the Durgas is said to have 18 arms. She is said to have sturdy hands, thighs and breasts and is adorned with characteristic ornaments. In the left arm she holds sūtra, shield, bell, mirror, *tarjini*, bow, standard, *damaruka* and *pāsa*. In the right arm she holds *sakti*, *mudgala*, *sūla*, *vajra*, conch, lotus, *salaka*, arrow and *cakra*.

The other eight Durgas are said to bear 16 arms. They carry the same emblems except the arrow and the *damaruka*. The names of these nine Durgas are given as Rudra, Chanḍa, Sasi, Saiva, Caṇḍi, Krūra, Anucandika, Navami and Ugracaṇḍa.

Sri Tatvanidhi gives the description of a Durga whose name is called Ripumārini. She is red in colour, holding *tarjini* and *sūla* in her arms. It also gives another Durga whose name is given as Vindyavāsini. She is seated on a golden lotus; three eyed; ilghtning in complexion. It also states that she is seated by the side of Siva.

Kāli :

(1) Seated on *ratnasimhāsana*.
Red coloured garments.
4 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
Sūla	*Kapāla*
Damaruka	*Pāsa.*

(2) 4 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
damaruka	*pāsa*
sūla	*kapāla*

(3) 4 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
sūla	*pāsa*
damaruka	*kapāla*

(4) Blue complexion.
Three eyes.
4 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
abhaya	*pāsa*
sūla	*kapāla*

(5) White in complexion,
wears snake and sisu kundalas.
4 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
sūla	*nāga*
damaruka	*kapāla*

Bhadra Kāli :

(1) Black in complexion,
wears red garments.
8 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
sūla	*kapāla*
vetala	agni
sword	bone
damaruka	shield

(2) Varied complexion,
golden coloured garments
face be smeared with flesh and blood.
14 armed.

Right arms	*Left arms*
sūla	*sakti*

kunta	*sankha*
cakra	standard
musala	plough
tomara	fire
bell	*vajra*
pāsa	shield

order not given.

(3) 4 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
sūla	*kapāla*
sword	shield

(4) Standing in *ālidhā* pose
four lions.
18 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
akshamāla	*sruva*
sūla	*kamandalu*
sword	*danda*
shield	*sakti*
arrow	*mrga*
bow	agni
sankha	*abhaya*
cakra	*varada*
sruk	*pātra*

(5) Three eyes
snake breast-band.
10 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
sūla	*sakti*
vajra	lotus
sword	*pāsa*
gada	bone
axe	*kapāla*

Mahakali : (1) Black complexion
terrific countenance.
4 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
katvānga	*kapāla*

dundubi

(2) ten faces.
ten legs.
10 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
sword	shield
cakra	*sūla*
mace	*busundi*
bow	head
arrow	*sankha*

order not given.

(3) Adored by Kshatriyas.
12 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
sūla	*alapallava*
vajra	*sakti*
cakra	fire
mace	*pāsa*
arrow	lotus
axe	*kapāla*

Kālika :

(1) Adored by Sudras.
Wears *Jatāmakuta*,
8 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
sūla	*kapāla*
damaruka	shield
sword	bell
karavala	*vismaya*

(2) 8 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
sūla	bow
vajra	*gada*
sword	*pāsa*
nārāca	*kapāla*

Kshetramuṇḍi :

Identical with Tripurā.
Three heads.
Jatāmakuṭa
very powerful.
6 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
sūla	*kapāla*
damaruka	*pāsa*
sword	shield

Kāli :

She is with dancing Siva.
Sun, moon and fire are her eyes.
8 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
parasu	snake
fire	*dvaja*
snake	*pustaka*
dolahasta ?	

***Kāli* :**

A two armed Kāli is also described
She would hold *Kapāla* and *sula* in her arms.
Or She may hold plough and pestle.

***Cāmuṇḍa* :**

Black complexion
Three eyes.
Terrific countenance.
Snake breast-band.
Jaṭāmakuṭa
muṇḍa māla
8 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
sūla	*pāsa*
ankusa	shield
sword	bell
vajra	*kapāla*

***Carmamuṇḍa* :**

Green complexion.
terrific countenance
three eyes.
Jata
garland of skulls.
serpent breasṭ-band
8 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
sūla	bow
cakra	*pāsa*
vajra	*sakti*
arrow	*kapāla* (main manuscript)

***Bhairavī* :**

Adored by Sudras.
Black or green complexion.
Jaṭāmakuṭa
Bilvamāla
breast-band.
16 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
sūla	*alapallava*
cakra	*sakti*

vajra	bow
pāsa	lotus
tomara	*pindipāla*
ankusa	*pāsa*
katvānga	*vetala*
gada	*kapāla*

Jarjarā :

Adorned by Vaisyas.
Black or golden complexion.
Jaṭāmakuṭa.
terrific countenance
three eyes.
14 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
sūla	*Vismaya*
vajra	*sakti*
cakra	bow
gada	*pāsa*
axe	*nāga*
arrow	*kapāla*
nārāca	bell

Laghuspāmala :

Is the personification of first mensuration and is called *pratama Pushpini*; wears red garments bears *Vina* in her arms. Another description says she is four armed with *vina* in the two arms and liquor vessel in the left arm.

Rājamātangi :

Seated on *ratnāsana* with one of her leg on a lotus pedestal; black in colour; listening to the parrot; bears crescent moon, wears black garments; plays on *vina* with her two arms.

Indrākshi Devi :

Two armed holding *Vajra* in the right and *varada* in the left arm; wears the yellow garment; adorned with ornaments.

Tulajā Bhavāni :

Red in colour with smiling face wearing pearl jewellery holding *amirtha kalasa* in one arm and laddle in the other.

Bhuvanēsvari :

Resembles the rising sun in colour, bears crescent moon; three eyes, seated on a lotus holds *Pāsa*, *ankusa*, *abhaya* and *varada*.

Angālamman :

Red in colour, two eyed; holding lotus in both her arms wearing *karaṇḍamakuda*.

Sivaduti :	Holds in her left arms a *patra*, *gada*, shield and *pasa* and in the right lotus, axe, sword and *ankusa*.
Annapūrni :	*Sindura* in complexion; three eyed, holds *pasa*, *ankusa*, *abhaya* and *varada* in her arms.
Kāmesi :	Holds *pasa*, sugarcane bow, a *patra* with liquor, *ankusa*, flower arrow and *varadamudra*; red in colour and three eyed.
Bālā :	Holds *akshamāla*, *pusthaka*, *abhaya* and *varada*.
Māri :	Wears *Agnikesa*, *Damaruka*, *sūla*, *katga*, *kapāla*, seated.
Kāmakoṭi :	Holds *padma*, *akshamala*, *abhaya* and *Ūroahasta; karaṇḍamakuṭa* or *jaṭāmakuṭa* wears crescent moon. She is called Sivasakti in manuscript (collection of Vaithyanātha Sthapati) or she may be shown with two arms holding *uthpala* and *kataka* or she may hold Padma and *kundika*. In this aspect she is called Brahmāmsi.
Manonmaṇi :	Resembles moon in colour, five faced ten armed, holding *sūla*, *tanka*, *padma*, *abhaya*, *pāsa*, *varada*, *ankusa*, bell, *padma* and fire. A variation of the same deity with four arms is also shown, in which case she holds lotus, *abhaya*, *varada* and *utpala*.
Mahishāsuramardini :	Black in colour, eight armed, terrific deity, holds *cakra*, *sūla*, *kadga*, *Padma* in right arms; in left arms *sankha*, *dvaja*, shield and *patra*.
Cauri :	She is represented either seated or standing with either two or four arms. When endowed with four arms, she would hold *akshamālā*, *ankusa*, *pāsa* and *mātulinga* fruit in her arms. Variations are also noticed *Mṛga*, *parasu*, *varada* and *abhaya* are prescribed in certain texts, while yet others prescribe *pasa*, *ankusa*, *abhaya* and *varada*. While the later two forms are quite common, images with *mātula* fruits are rare though *akshamālā* and *pasa* in the upper arms are well known.
Saptamātas:	All most all the *silpa* texts describe the Saptamātas with only four arms holding respective emblems. One manuscript (Mss.13) in Mahabalipuram collection gives more arms to these goddess. They are as follows.
Brāhmi:	(1) 4 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
akshamālā	*kuṇḍika*
abhaya	*varada*

(2) 6 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
varada	*pustaka*
sruva	*kuṇḍika*
sūtra	*abhaya*

Māhesvari:

(1) 4 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
mṛga	*parasu*
abhaya	*varada*

(2) 5 faces-10 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
sword	*varada*
vajra	*pāsa*
sūla	bell
parasu	*nāga*
abhaya	*ankusa*

Kaumāri:

(1) 4 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
Vajra	*sakti*
abhaya	*varada*

(2) 6 heads-12 arms.

Right arms	*Left arms*
varada	bow
sakti	bell
patāka	lotus
danda	cock
patra	axe
arrow	*abhaya*

VII

TANTRISM IN MONUMENTAL ART

Though the worship of Sakti as the Primordeal mother is well-known in the Tamil country from the beginning of the Christian era, no temple assignable to that era has come down to us so far. However, a small copper figure (mother goddess?) hardly 3" in length, has been found among a number of grave goods, assignable to the megalithic period from Adicchanallur in Thirunelveli District. The date of Adicchanallur urn burrials has not been fixed with any measure of accuracy, but a period around 8th Century B.C. has been suggested.

Only from about the reign of the Pallavas, monumental art appears in Tamil land. Till recent times, it was believed that only from the time of Mahendravarman (600 A.D.) sculptural art was introduced in the Tamil region, but in recent years several hero-stones dated in the reign of Mahendra's father Simhavishnu and grandfather Simhavarman have been brought to notice and showing the figures of warriors who fought and died in battles or skirmishes. In some cases these memorial stones are found within the premises of Kali temple but their association is local. However the sculptures of Durga are found in Cave temples excavated in the reign of Mahendravarman.

In the reign of Mahendra

In Pallava region, we do not come across any monument, which could be firmly dated earlier than the time of Mahendravarman I. All most all the known monuments of Mahendra are excavated cave-temples, baring a few pillars found at the Ekamabaresvara temple of Kanchi, that bear his titles. These pillars are of no use to our study as they carry no carvings.

Of the cave temples of Mahendra, some are dated with the help of inscriptions while others are assigned to his period on grounds of style. In the absence of inscriptions the dating of uninscribed caves, has been a matter of controversy among scholars. It would therefore be appropriate to take first the dated monuments of Mahendra I for the present study. The cave temples from the following places Mandagappattu, Mamandur, Pallavaram, Vallam, Trichirappalli, Siyamangalam and Mahendravadi bear Mahendra's inscriptions. In some of these places there are more than one cave, as for example at Trichy, Mamandur and Vallam. But in all these places we take only the inscribed caves. The cave temples at Mandagappattu, Mamandur, Pallavaram and Trichirappalli bearing his inscriptions carry no image of Goddess, in any of her aspect.

Vallam

At Vallam, the cave I, was excavated by Skandasena, the son of Vasantapriyaraja, a subordinate of Mahendra. The temple is dedicated to Siva. On either side of the cave, the facade carries niches; the one on the South carries a fine relief of Ganesa and the northern one carries a worn out image of Jyeshṭa. With both legs hanging down she is shown seated with a slim body. Sri K.R. Srinivasan in his Pallava Cave temples holds that these are not contemporary with cave temple but are later since according to him, there could be no image of Ganesa in the time of Mahendra I. We do not agree with this suggestion. Since the images of Ganesa and Jyeshṭa are seen flanking in the inscribed excavated cave, we are justified in taking them as coeval with the cave. Here then is a temple of the time of Mahendra, having an image of Goddess Jyeshṭa, in the north, along with an image of Ganesa in the south. Jyeshṭa is shown alone without her son and daughter who are represented in most of the cases.

Siyamangalam

The cave temple at Siyamangalam, called Avanibhātana Pallavēsvaram, is a Mahendra foundation. Since it bears Mahendra's inscription, it is a good example of his period. In one of the Pillars, is shown Siva as Vrshabhāntika. "Siva is shown standing four armed, the upper two holding *mṛga* and *akshamālā*, lower right in *kaṭi* and lower left resting by the elbow on the intervined face of the bull......... In front of the bull and to the left of Siva, stands Pārvati, in *tribhanga*, two armed, the left arm in *kaṭi* and the right holding a flower. She wears a *jaṭāmakuṭa* like Siva and stands under a tree." This is perheps one of the earliest representations of the Goddess now, surviving.

Thiruchi

Of the other notable temple of Mahendra, Thiruchirappalli, upper rock-cut cave is the most important. It is called *Lalitānkura Pallavesvaragrham* in inscription after one of Mahendra's title. It has a sanctum now empty and an excellent image of Gangādhara carved on the wall facing the sanctum. In the Gangādhara panel, there is no image of Pārvati, but Mahendra's inscription in this temple is interesting.

It says that Pārvati the daughter of Himavān, remains ever seated by her Lord in this cave temple caused to be made by Mahendra. This is essentially a poetic expression—one of the finest expressions to be found in epigraphs. This has however made scholars to believe that Mahendra installed an image of Pārvati along with Śiva in this temple. In the sanctum of this temple are two sockets cut in the floor. Describing these sockets Sri K.R. Srinivasan says "Right in the centre of the floor is cut a socket 2 feet square and about 2½ feet deep and to the north of it, between it and the wall of the side is a shallower oblong pit 2 feet×1 feet and about 9 inch deep cut longitudinally. While the central pit could have accommodated the representation of Siva, as Mahendravarman mentions in his inscriptions, the pit to its north might have contained a bas-relief of Pārvati mentioned in the same inscription. Perhaps she was shown as facing the central deity as if worshipping it from its north side, which is the conventional position for a devi or for one performing *archana*".

In our opinion this suggestion is untenable. Sri K.R. Srinivasan has come to the above conclusions for two reasons. 1) that there were no lingas under worship in the sanctum during the time of Mahendravarman, and 2) the deity installed was in the form of a *Sakalamūrti*, anthropomorphic image and not a linga. In this connection there is a verse in the same inscription of Mahendra, which refers to the main deity as *linga*. To justify the stand taken by him, Sri K.R. Srinivasan is at great pains to show that the word *linga* in the inscription does not mean linga. We have shown elsewhere that this stand is untenable. The verse in discussion unquestionably refers to the linga installed by Mahendra in the temple. A such the central socket in the sanctum was intended to receive the lower part of the linga.

In many a Pandya rock-cut caves of the region like Pilaiyarpatti and Thirumeyyam, there are sockets in the sanctum, just underneath the *gamukha* of the linga piṭha. (It must also be mentioned that in these cases the linga is rock-cut). This socket was in all probability intended to collect the *abhiseka* water. As such the second socket in the Thiruchirappalli cave, was intended to collect the *abhisheka* water and not for an image of Goddess Pārvati.

Other caves

Before leaving Mahendra's period, we will discuss three more cave temples. The Ranganātha cave in Singavaram village in South Arcot District is an important cave temple of the period. It bears no inscription but is assigned to the reign period of Mahendra I, by Dubriuel and to the reign of Mahāmalla or even Paramesvara by K.R. Srinivasan. This is a cave temple dedicated to Vishnu as Anantasāyi whose image is carved on the back wall of the sanctum. In the south side of the facade, is a niche containing a carved sculpture of Durgā. Devi is shown standing in *tribhanga* pose, placing her right leg over the Mahisha's head and the left firmly planted on the ground. In her four arms, the upper right holds *cakra* and the left *sankha*, while both her lower arms are placed on thigh an unusual representation. To her right is shown a sturdy, fierce looking devotee, kneeling, holding something in his right arm while the left is placed on his thigh. Sri K.R. Srinivasan suggests that this man is piercing his own hand with a dagger and is letting blood out as a form of blood offering. To the left of Devi is shown another kneeling devotee with his left over his hip and holding the right arm in the pose of adoration.

The association of Durga with the Vishnu temple is not a surprise. Similar Durga panels occur at Mamallapuram, in the Varāha and Adivarāha cave temples.

Thiruchi Lower Rock-cut Cave

The lower rock-cut cave at Thiruchirappalli, (Pl. 1) is an important temple for the present study. Considering this as a latter temple, Sri K.R. Srinivasan, has not described this cave in his work. The sculptures are absolutely Pallava in style and are to be dated to 7th century A.D. In our opinion it immediately follows the upper rock-cut cave in the same hill excavated by Mahendra. This must be assigned to the first half of the 7th century.

This cave has two sanctums one on either side of the side walls. One is dedicated to Siva and the other to Vishnu. At the back wall facing the entrance are shown a row of deities, all of them standing identical heights and adored by devotees. The central image is that of Brahma. With Siva and Vishnu in the sanctum and Brahma occupying the central part of the hind wall; this constitutes the unit of three Primordeal deities of the Hindu pantheon. To the right of Brahma are shown Ganesa and Kārtikeya in separate niches, and to the left are shown Sūrya and Durgā also in separate niches.

All the five deities shown at the back wall of the cave, are flanked by devotees below and flying figures at the top. Thus this cave temple gives equal importance to seven deities, Siva, Vishnu, Brahma, Ganesa, Kārtikeya, Sūrya and Durgā. Each of these deities, was adored as Primordeal deity by the respective sect of the Hindu religion. The adorers of these deities constitute the major sects of the Hindu religion.

There is a tradition which groups the major sects of the Hindu religion as *Shanmatha*, the six cults, which includes Saivam, Vaishnavam, Gānapathyam, Kaumāram, Sauram and Sāktam, each claiming their respective deity as the Primordeal God. The worship of Brahma did not develop as an independent cult. Among the six cults, the Sākta cult centered around the worship of Durga, as suggested by this panel.

The cave temple dedicated to Vishnu, and excavated by Mahendra at Mahendravadi, bears no image of Durga. There are a few cave temples, brought under Mahendra style, by K.R. Srinivasan and others, which we will discuss under Rājasimha in the 8th century A.D. The most important of such monuments are at Mamallapuram.

MAMALLAPURAM

The most important site for the study of Sakti cult in the Pallava period, is Mamallapuram. Mamallapuram abound in monumental architecture, cave temples, monoliths, structural temples and bas reliefs. It is well known that the finest representation in Indian art of Sakti, as Mahishasuramardini, is found in this site which is often described as a moving picture in stone. Besides this Mahishasuramardini, Sakti appears as Durga, and Candikā in various forms and also in association with both Siva and Vishnu.

Authorship of Mamallapuram

The monuments at Mamallapuram are assigned to a succession of Pallava rulers beginning from Mahendra I, but mostly to Narasimha I, and a few to Paramesvara I. But I have assigned all the monuments to Rājasimha, in an article "New light on Mamallapuram" published in 1962.

The main reasons for assigning them to Rājasimha are:-

1. The greatest event in the life of Mahamalla is the conquest of Vātāpi which is not mentioned in the Mamallapuram inscriptions.
2. The greatest event in the life of Paramesvara is the conquest of Chālukya Vikrāmāditya which also is not found in the epigraphs of Mamallapuram.
3. Therefore there is no inscription of Narasimha I or Paramesvara I at Mamallapuram.
4. The inscriptions at Ganesa ratha, and Dharmarāja Maṇḍapa which are repetitions of Rājasimha's inscriptions at Saluvankuppam specifically state that the king caused the temple to be made.
5. The Tittle, *Atyantakāma* appearing in many monuments of Mamallapuram is the exclusive title of Rājasimha proved by his other inscriptions.
6. The Dharmarāja ratha, Dharmarāja maṇḍapa, and Ganesa ratha are called *Atyantakāma Pallavesvara grhas* after the title of Rājasimha, and
7. That Rājasimha has employed varieties of scripts, inscriptions, architecture and sculpture in his known monuments show that he was a lover of variety, also seen in the monuments of Mamallapuram.

A few attempts have been made to subject my above views to critical examination. Though these views are based on what is called architectural or sculptural evolutions, almost all the scholars now begin to agree that all the inscriptions at Mamallapuram belong to Rājasimha. They suggest that these monuments were there early and that Rājasimha misappropriated these monuments to himself, by inscribing his epigraphs. However my objections to their view is fundamental. These are foundation inscriptions in which the king specifically states that he caused the temples to be made. If such foundation inscriptions are held as misappropriations, with no evidence to the existence of the monuments earlier, there will then be no way of dating any monument in the world. Any inscription can be dubbed as a misappropriation. As such I feel that no argument has been put forth to disclaim my suggestion on valid grounds. I therefore discuss all the monuments of Mamallapuram as the creations of Rājasimha.

Instead of discussing representations of Saktis under various monuments, it would be easy to study them under various iconographic aspects. In doing so we hold that after the period of Mahendra I, the period of Rājasimha is the most important stage in the distribution of Sakti images.

In Mamallapuram, there are a number of cave temples, dedicated to Siva, Vishṇu and Durga. A few of them are solely dedicated to Durga.

Kotikkal Maṇḍapa

The cave temple at the northern end of the village, now called Kotikkal maṇḍapa is undoubtedly a monument dedicated to Durga. It is a simple maṇḍapa-type cave temple with only one row of pillars at the outer end. The sanctum projects into the maṇḍapa, with a flight of steps. At the beginning of the step is a moon slab. No carving representing the deity is inside the sanctum, now plain. The sanctum is shown on a raised *adhishṭāna*, which is of the *Pratibandha* variety. Flanking the sanctum are shown female guardians, the dvārapālikas, closely resembling the ones in the Draupadi ratha dedicated to Durga. The dvārapālika to the north of the sanctum, stands in *tribhanga* pose, with her legs crossed, holding a long curved sword in her right arm and resting her left arm on a shield. The dvārapālika to the south of the sanctum, also shown in *tribhanga* pose stands with her left arm placed on her hip and the right holding a lofty bow, planted before her. Besides the Draupadi ṛatha, the Durga panel in the Ādivarāha cave also carries similar dvārapālikas holding sword and bow. Though there is no image of the deity inside the sanctum of the Kotikkal maṇḍapa, the presense of the dvārapālikas unmistakably suggests that this is a cave temple dedicated to Durga. Further this shows that Maṇḍapa-type temples were also dedicated to Durga.

Regarding the date of this cave temple, Sri K.R. Srinivasan states that the title *Vāmānkuśa*, is neither one of the known epithets of Mahendra I, nor of Māmalla. "It appears to be the title of a chieftain, perhaps a subordinate to the Pallavas, who excavated the cave temple". Srinivasan goes a step further and states that the title appears to be that of one of the Telugu chola kings. I think there is no need to postulate a Telugu chola origin to this cave. In the Kailasanātha temple of Kanchi, the title *Jnānankusa* is found as one among the three hundred titles of Rājasimha. In the Dharmarāja ratha, the same king had the title *Vāma*. Since both the names *Vāma* and *ankuśa* are found among Rājasimha's titles, this cave was also a foundation of Rājasimha.

Mahishāsura Rock-cut Cave

To the north of the sea-shore temple is this rock-cut cave dedicated to Durga. On the northern face of this rock is shown a prancing lion, mauling a huge Mahishāsura. Mahishāsura is shown in a helpless condition, caught at the back by the devouring lion with one of his left arm thrown up in depair and the right holding the heavy club tucked in his arm pit. The mighty asura with his crest fallen, is screaming with pain, being unable to bear the onslaught of the lion.

The role played by the Devi's lion, in the battle between Mahishāsura and Devi is graphically described in the *Devi Māhātmya*. The lion, terrifying the battle-field with its mighty roar wrought havoc in the enemy's camp.

स च सिंहो महानादं उत्सृजन् धुतकेसरः ।
शारीरेभ्यः अमरारीणां असून् इव विचिन्वति ॥

In the battle that ensued between Devi and Mahishāsura, the *asura* began assuming many forms. He took the form of a lion; when its head was cut he assumed the form of a man; when the human figure was slain, he took the form of an elephant and draged the Mahasimha of the Devi with its trunk, shouting the battle cry. When Devi cut the trunk of the elephant, the *asura* again assumed the form of Mahisha.

———ततो सो भूत् महागजः ।
करेण य महा सिहं त्त चकर्ष जगर्जंच ।
कूर्षंतः तु करं देवी खङ्गेन निरकृंतत ।
ततो महासुरो भूयः माहिषं वपुरास्थितः ।।
(3-31-33)

What we see at the Mahishāsura rock is exactly the opposite of this scene, the Mahāsimha (great lion) jumping on the head of *asura*, drags him with it right paw clinching his shoulder; the *asura* with his back turned to the lion, tries to escape from the clutches of the roaring lion but without success (Pl. 2). This is a finest portrayal of the fight between the animals, the lion and buffaloe.

The cave proper is on the eastern face of the rock, and consists of a shrine cell, shown on an adhishtāna of the *pratibandha* type, consisting of *upāna*, *padma jagati*, *vṛtia kumuda* and *prati*. The cell is flanked by lion-based pilasters. On either side are shown *dvārapālikas*. Inside the cell is shown an eight armed Durga. No steps are shown. The colossal figure of Mahishāsura has given the name to this rock-cut cave.

The Tiger-cave at Saluvankuppam

The Yāli maṇḍapa, popularly called the Tiger-cave at Saluvankuppam about two miles north of Mamallapuram must also be considered here. On the north face of the rock can be seen an attempt to cut a seated lion with a square socket in its abdomen, resembling the seated lion with Durga in its abdomen in the sea-shore temple. The yāli maṇḍapa may also be considered a dedication to Durga. Fanciful theories are put-forth in recent years regarding this cave. One view holds this as an *utsava mandapa*, where the processional deities were brought and placed on audience when the king himself witnessed the festival. The utterly unfinished pilaster between the elephant, is claimed as *Indradhvaja* (with no parallel either in the Pallava or post Pallava sculptures) to justify the claim.

What makes this the most fascinating cave temple of all the Mamallapuram caves, is the bewitching row of yāli heads, arranged as a circular aureole around the cave temple. This arrangement is so unique and charming, that it has a captivating beauty. The cave in the centre, is plain without any image carved at the back wall. The entrance of the shrine is adorned with lion-based pilasters, the lions being shown in rearing position with mounted soldiers. On either side are recesses cut deep without any sculpture. Steps leading to the cave are flanked by seated lions. The two seated elephants with *howdas* on their back and the horse, shown south of the yāli maṇḍapa, must be considered pure artistic creations, with no functional motives. This group, consisting of the yāli maṇḍapa, elephants, horse and the lion are the creations of Rājasimha.

A small replica of the yāli maṇḍapa is carved on a low-crop, south of the shore temple. By its side are some other carvings, showing sedent and recumbant lion. As these are weather-worn it is difficult to describe their cult association. But one thing is certain these are creations motivated by purely aesthetic appeal rather than ritual or functional needs.

There is one monument which we have to discuss as a temple solely dedicated to Durga and that is the monolith called Draupadi ratha. We will discuss this under temples to Durga. There is another group of monoliths Piḍāri *rathas* that need mention on account of their association with the word Piḍāri. These are two unfinished monoliths at the western end of the village. Since these two monoliths are near a Piḍāri temple, they came to be called Piḍāri rathas. Otherwise they have nothing to suggest that they were dedicated to Piḍāri. Being left unfinished and with no sculpture to suggest its dedication, we will not venture to say to which deity these were intended.

Draupadi Ratha : (*Durga Temple*)

Among the monuments at Mamallapuram, the so called Draupadi ratha is the most important with reference to the Sakti cult in Tamilnad. It is perhaps the earliest surviving temple proto-type, dedicated to Durga.

The name Draupadi ratha is a misnomer. Since there are five monoliths here, the common people called all these monoliths after the name of the Pāndava brothers and the temples came to be called *Panca Pāṇḍava rathas*; normally the names of Dharma, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva should have been associated; however in view of the fact that inside this sanctum there is an image of Durga, the common people called this temple Draupadi ratha, after the wife of the Panca Pāndavas. In fact it is a pure and simple Durga temple. It is also interesting to note that the monoliths are clearly modelled out of the already existing structures. Hence the Draupadi ratha, may be taken to portray really the Durga temples that existed then. Mention has been made earlier, while discussing Silappadhikarma, that the temple of a Goddess was refered to as *Kuccara Kuṭisai*, a hut of Kurchara. It is significant therefore that the Durga temple at Mamallapuram is in the form of a hut. (Pl. 3).

The monolith Draupadi ratha, shares a broad and elaborate *upapiṭha* with the adjoining Arjuna ratha (Pl. 4). The *adhishtana* is of the *Pādabandha* variety consisting *upāna*, *jagati*, *tripaṭṭa kumuda* and *prati*. The *prati* portion has suffered damage. A series of slots have been cut to insert stones to finish the *prati* at a later stage. The wall is of simple variety with pilasters at the corners. Over this raises the super structure in the form of a hut. The corners of the hut are adorned with foliage designs. The stupi made of stone is now preserved in the ground. Above the entrance is a fine *makara* *torana*. There are niches flanking the entrance which house *Dvārapālikas*, Jaya and Vijaya (Pl. 5). The steps leading to the *garbhagrha* have a *candrasila* at the beginning. On the outer walls of the *garbhagrha* at the three sides, are niches housing images of Durga (Pl. 9). All the three are unfinished. All the three niches are toped by *makara toranas*. Jaya, the Dvārapālika to the north of the entrance, stands with a long sword in her right arm and a shield also long, rested on the ground, on which she is resting her left elbow on the shield. She wears an undergarment and also a breast-band. The sculpture is unfinished. Vijaya, in the southern niche, holds a bow as tall as her planted on the ground. On both the shoulders at the back are shown *tūnas*. (She is also shown with breast-band).

Inside the sanctum is the most powerfully delineated Durga standing on a lotus (Pl. 6). She stands like a warrior with full of "built-in" power, four armed. The *prayoga cakra* is in the upper right arm but the corresponding left is broken. The lower right is in *abhaya* and the left is on the thigh. Her lower left garment, is like that of warriors with heavy median loops and side tassels extending upto the ground. There is a broad breast-band. The necklace is interesting with a bell like pendent in the middle. There is also a *mangala sūtra* with tiger's nails as *māngalya*. Heavy *patrakundalas* adorn her ears. *Jaṭāmakuṭa* characterise her head. The Devi here is not shown as a young virgin, but as a full blown youth, commanding respect and reverence. By the side of her feet are shown two warrior devotees one on either side. The warrior to her right is kneeling before her holding his own head with the left arm and severing the neck with a sword with a grim determination in fulfilment of his vow (Pl. 7). The head turned up, with muscles and chin drawn in, depict the quality of the sacrificer. Nothing will swerve him from this supreme sacrifice. He is a majestic personality, who draws our admiration. Seated to her left is another kneeling figure with both arms folded in *anjali*, adoring the Devi, who is receiving the supreme sacrifice of the other. Above the Devi are shown two *ganas* (Pl. 8) one on each side. They are tough guys, two of them with moustaches and sturdy swords rested on their shoulders. The other two are adoring the Devi. In front of the ratha is cut a standing lion, representing the mount of the Devi.

This temple has certain features that deserve special mention. The Durga inside the sanctum is standing on a lotus pedestal and not on the head of a buffaloe. This shows the Devi stands in the sanctum not as the destroyer of Mahisha but as the *Parādevata*, the supreme Goddess, standing on the sacred lotus seat, adored by all. It is of interest to note that in the *Silappadhikāram*, the Devi as Durga is said to reside in the heart of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva and their heart is likened to a lotus. She is also said to remain as an effulgent light in that heart. On the three walls of the *garbhagṛha*, the same Devi is shown as Durga, with the one at the back (Pl. 9), standing on the Mahisha's head. Just as Iccā Sakti, Kriyā Sakti and Jnāna Sakti are shown around the *garbhagṛha* of later Amman shrines so also here Durga images are shown on all the three sides. So the tradition of placing Sakti images in the *garbhagṛha* niches of the Amman shrines, could be traced back to 8th century A.D.

The orientation of the temple to the west need no special attention since it follows the other three monoliths all of which face west. But it is significant to note that the Durga temple is in the North in the whole group. Durga is always assigned the Northern direction and is called *Vaḍavāyil Chelvi*, the darling of the northern quarters. It is possible, the northern most monolith has been delibrately chosen for Durga. Many temples solely dedicated to Durga exist, but none of them have retained their original structure. At Uttaramerur, the Durga temple, with a Pallava sculpture, is in its original position in the northern side of the village but its shrine or superstructure can hardly be considered original. In the absence of any original Durga temple that could be dated to early mediaeval period, we may hold that the Draupadi ratha is the only earliest surviving temple that has preserved to us the early traditions of an independent Durga temple.

Mention has been made earlier that in Pallava period, Durga cult was a predominant one. We find her as an independent deity in the Draupadi ratha and also in the Koṭikkal maṇḍapa. She also appears in rock-cut caves dedicated both to Siva and Vishnu, besides the structural temple at the sea-shore.

Durga in Vishnu Caves

In two Vishṇu cave temples, Durgā is shown. They occur in Varāha and Ādivarāha cave temples. Before discussing the detailed discription of the deity, one significant point needs attention. In both the cave temples she appears in association with Lakshmi. Both the cave temples face west. In both instances, Durgā is present to the south of the *garbhagṛha* and Lakshmi is to the north. The particular position of Durgā is prescribed in *Marīci Samhita* (*Dakshiṇe Srih Vāme Harinim ca*) (P. 57) and these seem to conform the above convention.

In the Ādivarāha cave, Durga is shown with eight arms and holds *cakra*, sword, bell and *kapāla* in the right arms and conch, shield, bow and parrot in the left arms. Below her left leg is the head of Mahisha while the right is bent and placed on the ground at the back. Above her right is shown a trident on a long shaft. The Devi stands in delightful pose with moving limbs and graceful bends of the body. By the side of her feet, one on either side, are human figures both holding flowers anda doring the Devi. Above the Devi are shown *ganas* carrying vessels and chouri. Further a lion is shown on the right and deer on the left side of the Devi. Jayā and Vijayā are also shown on either side of Durga. Jayā holds a sword in her right arm and rests her left on the shield. Vijayā holds the long bow. Both these attendents of the Devi may be considered the best representations of the theme in Mamallapuram.

In the *Varāha maṇḍapa*, the main sanctum is empty. But owing to the presence of Varāha and Trivikrama, the cave has been rightly considered a shrine dedicated to Vishnu. Recent researches have shown that the Dvārapālas of this cave temple are Vishnu's *Āyudha purushas*. In this Vishnu cave, Durga is shown to the south of the sanctum, standing not on the head of Mahisha but on a lotus seat. This four armed deity holds *cakra*, *sankha*, *abhaya* and *kaṭi hastas* as in the Draupadi ratha but is some what less vibrant. The two devotees are shown in this panel as well. The one to her right is facing the Goddess with his back turned towards the spectator and is severing his own head. The other fellow is seated in adoration. Above are shown two *ganas* on either side flying. Further above are shown a lion to the right and a deer to the left. The Devi is shown with a parasol above her head. In the Draupadi ratha lion, deer and the parasol are absent.

In the Varāha and Ādivarāha caves, the niche to the north of sanctum carries the image of Srīdevi. She is seated on a high lotus seat and holds lotuses in both her arms. Above her are shown two elephants, both carrying water vessels, one pouring water over the head of the Devi. Two female attendents are shown carrying vessels on either side of the Devi. Both panels are remarkable sculptures, the one at the Ādivarāha cave being the finest representation of Lakshmi in Pallava art.

Durga in Trimurti Cave

Before we takeup the Siva caves, in would be interesting to study the representation of Durga in the Trimurti Cave. The cave has three sanctums excavated on the rock face, which are dedicated to Subrahmanya, Siva and Vishnu. To the south of this group is carved an image of Durgā, standing on the head of a Mahisha with 8 arms. *Cakra*, arrow, sword with bell and *abhaya* are in the right arms. The left arms carry *sankha*, bow, shield and *kaṭihasta.* The Devi wears heavy lower garments and breast-band. There is a *channavira* on her body. Above the sculpture is a *makaratorana.* We have seen that this cave temple is dedicated to Guha, Siva and Vishnu, with Siva in the centre and in this temple dedicated to three deities, Durgā is seen occupying a place.

Durga in Siva Caves

There are a number of Siva caves in Mamallapuram; some of them are inscribed just as the Dharmarājamaṇḍapa, which calls it an *Isvaragṛha*, but only two temples had sculptured panels of deities and they are the Rāmānuja mandapa and Mahishāsura-mardini cave. In the Rāmānuja mandapa, the sculptures have been chiselled off at a later date. The back wall of the sanctum shows clear traces of a Somaskanda panel. On the south wall was a Durga, very much similar to the Ādivarāha cave and on the northern wall a Gajalakshmi but both the sculptures have been completely obliterated.

Mahishāsuramardini

The *Mahishāsuramardini* panel, is the greatest product of Indian genius and is a veritable epic in stone (Pl. 10). It has rightly received the admiration of the world.

The cave temple carrying this master piece, is dedicated to Siva and carries an image of Somaskanda in the sanctum. There are two side cells one on either side; but to whom they were dedicated is not very clear. The cave itself faces east. In the northern wall, facing south is the famous *Mahishāsuramardini* and on the opposite side Vishnu is shown as *Anantasayi*. It has been pointed out by many scholars that the Association of *Mahishāsuramardini* and *Ananṭasāyi* Vishnu recall Devi *māhātmya*.

The *Mahishāsuramardini* panel is skilfully planed. There are as many as eighteen figure sculptures in this panel, all of them neatly distributed in space, each falling in its own position, each vying with each other suggesting the great moment of victory. The central figure is Devi seated on the prancing lion aiming an arrow. Mounted firmly on the lion, turns her body and head slightly to give force to the drawn arrow. A long sword whose power is yet to be commanded is held across passively in the lower right arm. The war bell that could produce infinite and terrific noice, loud enough to drown the mighty roar of the monster is in the other arm. The *cakra* the embodiment of Vishnu's power is in the other right arm. As if to suggest that the bow itself is sufficient to demolish the might of Asura the bow is held firmly in the extended left arm. The other arms hold *sankha*, *pāsa* and shield. The presence of shield is so insignificantly shown that the Devi seems to have no use for it. A parasol held above the head of the Devi by a female dwarf is in tune with the movement of the scene. Around the Devi are shown dwarfs forming a *mandala*. Most of them carry weapons, sword and shield or bow and arrow; all moving forward to strike. One carries a fly-whisk and yet another a plate carrying plate full of delicious food for the immanent victory-feast. There is only one female attendent who is in fore front striking powerfully. She has already fell an asura lying dead in front of her.

The mighty asura, who caused the universe to tremble and whose power and valour drove even the very Creator, Indra and other Gods to run hither and thither for shelter, stands before the Devi, occupying a greater part of the panel by his broad and tall body. The whole weight of the asura is now thrown on his left leg, the right leg being dragged in retreat. The powerful *gada* with which he reigned supreme has now suddenly become heavy. He can no more whirl it around with his powerful right arm. Its weight is now supported by the left arm. With his body already beginning to turn back, he is clearly in retreat, a retreat that is to cause him his final doom. But yet his demonic nature is latent. He is obstinate, unwilling to yield, turning his grim and determined face to see whether he could still offer battle. The Asura who can fly, leap and cause havoc in the field has been pinned to the ground and his fatal fall is only a matter of moment. His army of soldiers are still in a worse condition. One is seen on the ground with his body severed, dying in anguish. Another pathetically falling dead with head and arms drooping down. Another one above the asura is shown as if praying for his life. To the left of the asura is one falling flat, supporting his weight with the left arm. The right is pointing to the immanent defeat. His eyes, feeling shy to face the defeat, leave no doubt about the final outcome. Above him is another soldier drawing back both his sword and shield is ready to flee turning his back. Further up is another figure with his face, completely turned back in utter defeat and drops his shield and sword. In between this group, hiding himself behind the Mahishasura, is a tiny figure, full of fear, looking up pathetically to his retreating master.

This panel depicts everything of the Devi group with tremendous striking force and everything of Asura retreating. Master indeed is the sculptor who conceived this scene and executed this so thoroughly and suggestively. We are in front of a world classic.

Nidrarupi

In the south wall of the cave is Vishnu in his cosmic sleep. The Asuras, Madhu and Kaitabha, are in a defiant mood at the feet of the cosmic sleeper. The conch represented as a dwarf and the *gada* represented as a female, are shown flying in the air. By the side of sleeping Vishnu are shown *cakra* personified, Mārkaṇḍeya rishi and Bhūdevi all in adoration. Vishnu lying on the Ananta is in supreme sleep which is depicted so blissfully that this panel is also recognised as one of the masterpieces of Pallava art. What does this panel seek to portray and what is the central deity? According to us this panel also portrays Sakti in one of her subtle form as Nidradevi. Nidradevi cannot be portrayed physically. She can only be suggested by portraying some one in deep sleep. In the '*Devi Bhāgavata*', the episode is graphically described. Vishnu lies in deep slumber and Brahma praises Nidradevi as *Parāmāya*. It shows clearly the supreme nature of Sakṭi. That is what seems to be suggested here.

It is of interest to mention that almost one hundred years later, this Mahishamardini cave, inspired another artist to excavate a similar cave in Malaiyadipatti in Pudukkottai district. There are two cave temples one dedicated to Vishnu as Anantasayin and the other to Siva. In the Siva temple is Mahishamardini resembling the Mahishamardini of Mamallapuram. The cave was excavated by a Muttaraiya chieftain under the Pallava ruler Dantivarman. Obviously this chieftain must have seen the cave at Mamallapuram in the heart of his master's domain and that he conceived a similar monument. It may also be stated that the depiction of Mahishamardini at Mamallapuram so graphically, clearly demonstrates, that the Durga concept was the most popular theme with the Pallavas.

Durga in Shore Temple

In the Sea-shore temple at Mamallapuram, the walls of both the Siva shrines have undergone restoration and have lost most of their original forms and sculptures. However the larger Siva temple called Kshatriyasimha Pallavesvaragrham, has retained the sculptures in their original position. In them we have Durgā portrayed in the northern wall of the *ardhamandapa*. It is very much obliterated but has the same characteristics as the one in the Kailasanatha temple of Kanchi.

Simha Durga

However in this temple there is an interesting rock-cut figure to the south of the shrines. A seated figure of a lion is carved *in situ* (Pl. 11). In its belly is cut a square socket and inside this is shown Durgā as Mahishāsuramardini. Durgā is shown seated on the head of Mahisha with 8 arms. Arrow, sword, sula and suci are in the right arms and the left holds bow, *sankha*, an indistinct emblem, and placed on the knee. On either leg of the lion are seated the dvārapālikas. By the side is a deer reclining but unfortunately its head is broken. So also is the head of the *gana* standing by the side. The sculpture is one of pure artistic representation with no religious motif but what interests us is the theme of Durgā chosen for such a representation. Mention has been made already, that by the side of the tiger cave at Saluvankuppam an attempt to carve a similar seated lion with a central socket has been made.

Besides the sea-shore temple there are two structural temples at Mamallapuram. One is the Olakkannesvara temple on top of the hill and the other Mukundanāyanār temple on way to Saluvankuppam. The later one has no sculptures on the walls. In the former though there are sculptures on the walls of the main sanctum, the wall of the *ardhamaṇḍapa* is plain. Besides the above, a fragmentary panel showing Vaishṇavi and Vārāhi, forming part of Saptamāta group is now preserved in the archaeological survey office at Mamallapuram. It is not known to which temple this group belongs. It probably belongs to the sea-shore temple. The panel is of Rājasimha's period.

Kanchi Temples

Besides the Kailasanātha temple, a few more Pallava temples at Kanchi, also deserve attention.

Iravātāna Temple

The Iravātāna at the entrance to the city is a small structure but it has retained all its sculptures. The temple faces west. In the Northern wall of the *ardhamandapa* is Durgā, and on the corresponding southern wall is Lakshmi. The main *Devakōshtas* carry Yōgesvara in the north, Samhara tāndava in the west and Dakshinamurti in the south. The Durga in the northern wall is six armed, holding *sankha*, *cakra*, *kataka*, *bow*, *kaṭihasta* and on the chest, aiming an arrow. Over her head are shown two umbrellas. The left leg is placed on the lion and the right is on the ground. She bears *ambarātuna*. This temple is assigned to the reign of Rājasimha.

Matangesvara

Of the two later Pallava temples assigned to the reign of Nandivarman Pallavamalla, the Matangesvara and Muktesvara deserve mention as they are on an elaborate plan. The Matangesvara some what unfinished, faces west. A part of the eastern wall and the entire southern wall are not sculpted. In the northern wall of the *ardhamandapa* is Durgā, standing with four arms holding *cakra*, *sankha*, *abhaya* and *kaṭihasta*. Neither the Mahisha nor the lion is shown at the feet. A parasol is over the head of the Devi. The Devi is flanked on either side by her female attendents. The one to her right holds the sword and shield and to the left a bow. At the south eastern wall of the temple is again shown Durgā, four armed with *sankha*, *cakra*, *kaṭaka* and *kaṭihasta*. The presence of Durga at the back wall is interesting. Besides these two figures, Cāmuṇḍa is shown dancing with dancing Siva. The sculpture is in the inner face of the *mukhamandapa* wall. Siva dances the *urdhva tāṇḍava* with ten arms and Cāmuṇḍa dances by his side with six arms. She wears *Jaṭābhāra*; in her arms are seen *damaruka* in one and fire in another.

Muktesvara Temple

In the northern wall of the *mukhamandapa* is Durga with four arms; *sankha, cakra, abhaya* and *kaṭihasta* are in the arms. No Mahisha's head is shown. The two attendents holding sword and shield are on either side.

Durga in Devakoshta of Pallava Temples

The above study of Pallava temples shows clearly that in the northern wall of the *ardhamandapa* of the Siva temples, Durgā was invariably positioned (wherever sculptural representations are seen). Secondly in none of these instances She is shown standing on the head of Mahisha, which is so common in later times. She is shown with four, six or more arms and sometimes flanked by female attendents wielding sword and bow. In none of these instances the human warriors severing their head or offering flowers, as found in later temples are noticed in the Durga panels of the *ardhamandapa*.

Panamalai

Before we close the study of Durga in Pallava temples of 8th century, one image in the Panamalai village deserves special mention. There is a hill in the village on top of which is a structural Pallava temple of Rājasimha. The temple has no sculptures on the wall except the Somaskanda inside the sanctum. There are three side shrines, projecting from the *gaṛbhagṛha* on the three sides. In one of the shrines is an excellant painting of Siva performing *Samhāra tāṇḍava.* By the side is shown Parvati, resting in a delightful pose witnessing the dance, as *Mahātāndava Sākshīni* (Pl. 12). The temple bears inscription of Rājasimha on the base.

But what is more significant for our study, is a natural cave at the foot of the hill overlooking the lake. The cave is a natural formation not very deep but narrow. At the end of this cave is installed a delightful *Durgā*. She stands with her left leg planted on the back of the lion and the right placed on the ground. She is eight armed holding *cakra*, sword, a five hooded cobra and *katihasta* in the right arms. In the left arms are bow, conch, suci and placed on the thigh. The strong and study lion faces the front with the right leg lifted up. The secluded surroundings, the cave and the majesty of the sculpture instils inspiration and reverence in the spectator. On the side face of the rock is an oft repeated verse of Rājasimha, which shows that Rājasimha was personally responsible for the selection of the site and theme.

Caṇḍi

We have mentioned that in the Pallava sculptures at Kanci and Mamallapuram, Durgā as Mahishamardini is the dominating theme. However at Mamallapuram occurs what may be considered the most striking example of Caṇḍi (Pl. 13). It is found in the North eastern part of the village amidst a group of Saptamātas. The figure of Caṇḍi is placed in the centre and the rest are on either side. The Caṇḍi which is 4½ feet high and taller than other sculptures alone is an 8th century Pallava sculpture while the rest are late figures probably belonging to 15th century A.D. The Caṇḍi originally should have been an independent deity, not belonging to a Saptamāta group. The Devi is seated in a dignified pose, with both her arms pressing her thigh, characteristing her vibrant power. The right arm holds firmly a sharpedged dagger, which could tear open the heart of any asuric devil. In the left arm she holds an asura looking like a child. His whole figure from shoulder to his knees is squeezed within the palm of the Devi, his head, hands and legs drooping dead like tiny twigs. The Devi has been able to catch hold of this invincible asura effortlessly. The asura appearing as a little child in her arm, magnifies the might and tremendous personality of the Goddess. There is no other sculpture in the whole of South India which could surpas this finest representation in its of expressives power. True to her nature, her hairs fall on the shoulders as *jaṭābhāra.* On the head is a skull. In her right ear Caṇḍi wears a *sisu* and the left a *patrakundala.* A string of skulls is worn around her body as *Yagnopavīta.* A breast band is present. A tiger's claw is worn as *tāli.* In the upper arms the right holds a bell but the left is broken. In the pedestal no figures are shown. That the meare look of the Devi is capable of reducing the entire universe to a waste land is suggested by her round ball like projecting eyes. And yet that she is a benign mother, with full of compassion and is prepared to take under her loving protection the needy souls is brought out vividly by her broad smile which is at the same time remenicent of the great laughter *caṇḍa aṭṭāhāsa,* so often referred to in literature. This Devi is a true representation of conception of Caṇḍi as it existed in the time of Pallava Rājasimha. We do not know whether the present location of the sculpture is its original position.

THE KAILASANĀTHA TEMPLE OF KANCHI

The Temple

For the study of Sakti cult in the art history of the Tamil country the Kailasanātha temple of Kanchi is an important land mark, not only because it is dated precisely with the help of inscription, but also because of immense variety in the portrayal of Sakti images. The temple was built by the Pallava ruler Rājasimha in the beginning of the 8th century A.D. It consists of a main *vimāna,* preceded by a *mandapa* (this *mandapa* was connected to the main *vimāna* by an additional structure in later times), and a cloistered enclosure. This cloister has a row of miniature cells running all around. These cells and the *prākāra* wall carry sculptures of various deities which consist of the benign and terrific aspects of Siva, Sakti and Vishnu, the full compliment of *Parivāra devatas,* the *Dikpālas,* and the *Vāstupada devatas.*

At the entrance to this enclosure is another but smaller temple erected by Mahendra, the son of Rājasimha. This also is a Siva temple, provided with a small enclosure, portraying *Parivāra devatas* on its wall. At the outer side, are smaller Siva temples, built as dedicatory temples by the queens of Rājasimha. The entire wall surfaces of the main temple and the smaller temples are studded with sculptures of deities. Rājasimha, justifiably claims in his inscription here, that this temple was built with sculptural wealth, befitting his fame.

Saile Kailasalīlām apaharati grhe Rājasimhēsvarākhye

For an intelligent observer these sculptures will not only reveal the mythology they seek to portray with consumate artistic display, but also the codified architectural and religious principles that guided their distribution. I have shown elsewhere that this temple is built on the *Vāstupurusha mandala*, the *Padavinyāsa* being probably on the *Mandūkapada* variety. In the lay out of temples, the *Vimānas* are said to represent the *Purusha tattva* (male principle) and the *mandapa* in front the female principle (*Sakti tattva*). In this temple these are fully realised as will be shown in the sequense. Sakti appears in this temple in her various manifestations inside the sanctum, on the walls of sanctum and *mandapa*, in the miniature cells of the *prākāra* and also on the *prākāra* walls, besides the smaller temples in the front.

Somāskanda

While discussing the image of Somaskanda (Pl. 14) we have seen that Sakti is portrayed with Siva and her child Guha inside the sanctum. Thus she shares with her consort Siva, the main ritualistic sanctity.

Uma Portrayed on the Prākāra Wall

In the main *prākāra* wall of the temple, the *Pada devatas* and *Parivāra devatas* are shown. But what is striking is the repeated representations of Uma on the wall besides the *Pada devatas* and *Parivāra devatas*. On the *prākāra* wall of the main shrine alone She is portrayed 18 times. This number 18 should have some significance for all the other portrayals conform to the architectural numberings. We are unable to say what this 18 means in Sākta cult; the numbers 9 and 16 play a prominent role as *Navākshari* or *Shodasākhasarī*. While discussing the Tamil text Thirumandiram, a certain *cakra*, *Eroli cakra* was discussed. It sanctifies the number 18 consisting of 16 letters from *a* to *ah* and the two letters *ha* and *ksha*, which are said to reside in *Visuddhi* and *Ājnā cakras*. It would be too much to suggest that the repetition of Devi 18 times on the walls has anything to do with this *cakra*, but what could be suggested is the sacredness given to the number 18.

Kanyā

In all these representations, the Devi is shown as a young maiden, (*Kanyā*) seated on the peak of a mountain under a devine tree. The representation is clearly suggestive of the peak of Meru mountain and the Kadamba tree.

Sumeru Madhya Sringastha

In the *Lalitā Sahasranāma*, the Devi is said to reside on the peak of Sumeru mountain, *Sumerumadhya sringastha*. The *Syāmalā daṇḍaka*, another excellant poem on Devi, extols the Devi seated amidst the Kadamba trees in the middle of the Vilva forest. That the Devi is seated under the wish fulfilling *Kalpa tree* (*Kalpa druma*) is an oft repeated concept.

Vilvāṭavī madhya Kalpa drumā kalpa Kādamba Kāntāra Vāsaprivā.

Vīna Vādini

In two instances, the Devi is shown playing on musical instrument, a *Yāl* in one instance and *Vīna* (Pl. 15) in another instance. The association of the Devi with music is also a well known concept. She is extolled in Lalita Sahasranāma as *Nādarūpa*, the very embodiment of sound. The *Syāmalā daṇḍaka* praises her love of music and says that she is playing Vīna made of gems *Mānikka Vīnām Upalālayantīm.* In the hymn *Navaratnamālikā* the Devi is said to rest the *Vīna* on her left breast while playing it.

Vama kuca nihita vīnām.

She is said to be deeply engrossed in the sweet music of Vīna.

Vīna vādana velā Kampita Sirasam; also
Vina rasāsvāda navanavollāsam.

The Devi's hand holding the Vīna is said to be resplendent.

Vīnasankrānta kāntahastāntām.

Adored by Devas, Rishis and Ganas

Another interesting aspect noticed in this group of Devi sculptures, is the presence of sages either seated or standing adoring the Devi. In a number of instances a bearded sage is shown seated in Yoga pose with a *Yoga patta* going around his knees. He is holding his hands in *anjali* pose. In other instances the sage is shown standing with a flower in his arm adoring the Devi (Pl. 16). In a few instances nobles with crowns are shown seated below her adoring the Devi and they are clearly the Devas. The Devi is often flanked by female figures wielding fly whisks. In some cases we get dwarfish ganas blowing what looks like conch. Such representation show, that the Devi is adored by the Devas, *rishis* and *ganas*. In the *Lalita Sahasranāma*, the Devi is adored as the Supreme soul, by the Devas, the sages and the ganas, *Deva rishi gana sanghāta stūyamānātma Vaibhavā*, which is truly portrayed in these figures. She is also praised as a Swan, residing in the heart of the sages.

Muni mānasa hamsikā.

Mātangi

In as many as ten instances, elephants are portrayed under the seat of the Goddess which suggests the popularity of the association of elephant with Devi. The Goddess is often called Mātangi, the term being explained as the daughter of the sage Matanga. Mātangi also means the daughter of an elephant, or Kirāti. The representation of elephants below the seat suggest the Mātangi aspect of Devi.

Līlāsukapriya

The Devi as shown in this series has another significant aspect. She is shown playing with parrots. About nine sculptures portray parrots by the side of Devi; in some cases, the Devi is shown caressing them fondly. The *Syāmala daṇḍaka* refers to this aspect of the Goddess repeatedly as *tam sukam kimsukam lālayantim Parikrīdase.* She is said to be fond of playing with parrots *Līlā suka priye.* In two instances peacocks are shown in place of parrots.

Vanavāsini

That she is a forest dweller is a welknown concept. This is emphasised by the portrayal of lion, deer or buffaloes besides elephants in the Devi sculptures of Kanchi.

Distribution Pattern

Besides the figure of Pārvati shown on the Prākāra walls, the Devi is shown in different forms among which the Durga aspect is the predominating theme. The pattern of distribution suggests a certain set principles. We will discuss the pattern of distribution in this temple as it is important to understand the distribution of Sakti icons in the later temples.

The smaller temple called the Mahendravarmesvaragrha, has an enclosure wall of its own. It carries a row of sculptures on the walls facing the inner courtyard. In the front side facing north is shown Durga and facing it on the opposite side is Lakshmi. At the entrance to the bigger courtyard of the main shrine is Durga on the southern side and Lakshmi in the north. This shows Durga and Lakshmi were positioned at the entrance to the *prākāras* of Siva temples. We have no extent prākāra, later to these, till we come to the end of 9th century A.D. The temple at Perunpaluvur (Kilaiyur) built in the reign of Adityachola, by the Paluvettaraiyar chieftain, has retained its prākāra walls and some of the parivara shrines. There are a few other chola examples as well. In these places we do not get the representations of Durga and Lakshmi at the entrance. The great temple of Tanjore, built by Rajaraja I, in 11th century A.D., has retained the biggest prākāra in its original condition. So also the Siva temple at Gangaikonda Cholapuram. These also do not portray Durga or Lakshmi. However the gopuras erected from the middle chola period at Chidambaram and other places, carry Durga images at the entrance, and facing it are Bhairava images. In later gopuras this practise has been given up.

The cloister cells in the bigger courtyard of the Rājasimhesvara temple, carry the Parivāra devata besides the various aspects of Siva and Vishnu. Beginning from the south-eastern corner, the following images are shown. Ganesa, Durga (Pl. 17), Subrahmanya, Pārvati and forms of Vishnu and Siva. In line with the central *sūtra* of the *garbhagṛha*, is the Parivāra shrine dedicated to Brahma in the south and on the corresponding northern side is the Parivāra shrine dedicated to Vishnu. To the east of Brahma shrine is Jyeshṭā on the prākāra wall and to the west is Durga. In the next bay is Saptamāta and in next Candika. In the northern prākāra, the side wall of the Vishnu shrine carries an image of Sarasvati. These are the feminine images distributed on the prākāra wall and its cells. In the main prāsāda, Lakshmi and Sarasvati are shown on the southern wall of the ardhamandapa. In the northern wall of the ardhamandapa are shown Durga in the central niche flanked by Jyeshṭā on the east and Yogesvari on the west. In all the later temples the northern niche of the *ardhamaṇḍapa* carries Durga images as in this temple.

In the northern wall of the Garbhagṛha portion is an interesting group of sculptures. The central panel depicts Siva as Tripurāntaka. In front of him is shown Durga as Simhavahini, shown in fighting pose holding the bow in position and drawing an arrow; the lion is in prancing stance. It is interesting to mention that in the great temple of Tanjore, inside the *sandhara* passage, are excellant paintings of the chola period. In the northern wall, is depicted what may be called the most excellant painting of Tripurāntaka ever depicted in Indian art. The point worthy of note is that the representation of Tripurāntaka is also in the northern wall as in the Kailasanatha temple of Kanchi. In the painting, Durga is also shown as Simhavāhini, attacking the asuras.

In the Kailasanatha temple to the east of Tripurāntaka is shown Tripura Bhairavi seated. The Tanjore painting also portrays Bhairavi as Kali in the Tripurāntaka scene. The presense of Tripurāntaka, Tripura Durga and Tripura Bhairavi in the northern wall of the garbhagrha in both the temples could not be accidental but point to certain conventions.

In the front mandapa of the Kailasanatha temple of Kanchi, are shown Devi images at the four corners. Lakshmi and Sarasvati are shown in the Southern side and Durga and Jyeshṭā are shown in the northern side. We have seen similar representations in the Vimāna portion as well. In the Piravatana temple of Kanchi, assigned to Rājasimha's period, Lakshmi is shown in the southern side of the ardhamandapa and Durga in the northern wall of the ardhamandapa. In the great temple, of Tanjore and Gangaikonda Cholapuram, Lakshmi is shown in the south side of the Mahāmandapa and Sarasvati in the northern side. Durga is shown in the North, facing northern direction. It is therefore evident that the images of Durga, Lakshmi, Sarasvati and Jyeshṭā in the Mahāmandapa of the Kailasanatha temple conforms to ritual needs.

It may be mentioned that the maṇḍapa itself is considered a Sakti, *Mandaparūpini*. Aghorasambhup's paddhati, prescribes the worship of *Mandaparūpi devata* as

dvārasya sammukhīm syāmām
Pushpa ratnaugha varshinim
dhyātva āvāhya yayet vidvān
Smaret Mandaparūpinim.
(P. 217)

Among the Parivāradevatas of the Siva temples, eight of them constitute the *Parivāra maṇḍala*. An inscription dated in the 28th year of Parāntaka chola, (935 A.D.) refers to the establishment of *ashtaparivāra* temple in Thiruverumbur, which proves that in the 10th century, the main parivāras to the Siva temple were considered eight in number. The Āgamas do prescribe the same. In most of the Āgamas the following eight deities are prescribed as the Parivāra devatas.

1. Vrshabha.
2. Durga.
3. Saptamāta.
4. Ganesa.
5. Subrahmanya.
6. Jyeshṭā.
7. Vishnu, and
8. Sūrya.

Agastya, Brahma and Candesa are also included in place of others in some instances. A distribution list of the Parivāra deities in select āgamas is as follows :

	Rauravagama	*Kārana*	*Dīpta*	*Yogaja*	*Vīra.*
East.	Vrsha	Vrsha	Vrsha	Vrsha	Vrsha.
S. East	Brahma	Agastya	Simhāvahini.	Durga	Durga.
South	Saptamātas	Kātyāyani	Mātas	Mātas	Mātas.
S. West	Ganesa	Ganesa	Ganesa	Ganesa	Ganesa.
West	Kumāra	Kumāra	Kumāra	Kumāra	Kumāra.
N. West	Jyeshṭā	Shanmukha	Jyeshṭā	Jyeshṭā	Jyeshṭā.
North	Kushiki or Vishṇu	Vishṇu	Vishṇu	Vishṇu	Vishṇu.
N. East.	Sūrya	Sūrya	Sūrya	Caṇḍesa	Sūrya.

It may be seen from the list, that Durga appears as the Parivāra devata and is assigned the south eastern direction. In the Kailasanatha temple, Durga is seen in the South eastern direction. In the Rauravagama, Durga as Kausiki is assigned the northern direction, while the Kāranāgama assigns the Southern direction wherein she is called Kātyāyani. In the southern direction of the Kailasanatha temple is shown Durga on the wall, in a rare representation. This probably may be taken as Mahishasuramardini. In most of the texts, the Saptamātas are assigned the southern direction. In the Kailasanātha temple, the Saptamātas are found in the southern direction. In the chola temples which have preserved the parivara shrines, Saptamātas are seen in the southern direction as at Perumpaluvur (Kilaiyur) and Melappaluvur. In other temples, though the original parivara shrines have disappeared the Saptamātas may be seen still, south of the garbhagrha.

Most of the texts examined, assign north-western direction to Jyeshṭā. In the Kailasanatha temple though Jyeshṭā is seen in the northern direction on the Vimāna and on the Mahāmaṇḍapa, occupying the north western direction, Jyeshṭā appears in the parivāra group in the south.

Having discussed the distribution of Devi images in the Kailasanatha temple Kanchi, in relation to agamic texts and later temples, the individual deities in the Kailasanatha temple may now be considered in detail.

Durga

The greatest number of variety in which Durga is shown can be seen only in this temple. She is shown with 4, 8, 10 or 16 arms, and is shown seated either on a simhasana, or a lion; in some instances she is seen with her right leg planted on the ground and the left placed elegantly on the lion standing by. She is shown fighting vigourously being seated on a prancing lion in one. Yet in an another is shown majestically seated on a lion. Characteristic of Pallava genious, the artist has been able to portray Durga in various forms, which shows the mythology relating to the manifestation of Durga was fully developed by the 8th century A.D.

Kātyāyani

At the entrance to the main prākara, on the southern side is this most delightful Devi seated on a lion with sixteen arms. The distribution of 16 arms of this seated figure on the lion, is so tasteful and at the same time done with such consumate skill, it is an essay in marshalling space and volume. Nothing disturbs the elegance, everything falling in their respective positions, hightening the grandeur of the Devi. The soft, broad and at the sametime strong back of the lion acts as the seat on which the Devi is seated in an absolutely relaxed pose, the left leg hanging down and the right bent and based on the other thigh. That she is a royal personage (Rājarājesvari) is suggested by the parasol above her head. The following are the emblems seen on the arms. The upper right arm is drawing an arrow from the quiver. The second is held in *katakamudra,* but gently playing with *kandukas* (balls). The third arm is holding a circular discuss with four spokes. The fourth arm holds the *prayoga cakra.* The fifth arm holds the long handled *parasu* pointing down. The sixth placed on the thigh holds a five hooded cobra coiling around. One arm is shown hanging and the main right arm is aiming an arrow. In the left arms are seen the following emblems; the upper left has sūla, and the others horn (?), *sankha, vismaya, kataka, pāsa,* and a long bow. The lower left is on the thigh. The bow held vertically and the casual manner the arrow is discharged is suggestive of the ability of the Devi to destroy the most powerful *asuras* with effortless ease. The lion mount of the Devi, turned to the front with its front paw raised is another remarkable portrayal. Traces of paintings are noticed on the sculpture.

Durga

In the south eastern corner of the big prākāra, the cloistered cell next to Ganapati, carry a fine example of Durga (Pl. 17). The Devi is standing with her right leg on the ground and the left placed on the lion. The image is 8 armed. The upper right arm is drawing the arrow. A sword is held in the second right; the third is placed on thigh while the fourth is in *prayoga mudra,* as it aims an arrow. The upper left is holding a long bow, planted on the ground. The second left holds a shield; the third is in *suci,* while the fourth is on the thigh; a parrot is seen on this arm. The *prayoga cakra* and conch are shown separately to the right and left respectively. Two umbrellas are shown above. The lion is also interesting.

Mahishasuradamani

To the west of the Brahma shrine in the bigger prākāra, between the cells 20 and 21, is shown another Devi as Mahishasura damani. The figure is heavily plastered but its general characters are preserved. She is seated on a pedestal, the right rested on the pedestal. The hanging left leg is placed on the head of a Mahisha, which itself is shown on a pedestal (Pl. 18). On either side of this head are two warrior devotees both of them in adoration. The goddess has eight arms, holding *cakra, sula, kataka* (on the *abhaya* form of the Pallava period) and sword in the right arms and bow, conch, *parasu* and snake in the left arms. The sword is held across in prayoga pose.

Central Durga

What may be called the central Durga (because Durga images are found in all the later temples in the same position) is found on the northern wall of the *ardhamandapa* (*antarala* ?) of the main *prāsada*. Incidentally it is the biggest image of Durga in the temple. The Devi is ten armed, standing with the right leg on the ground and the left placed on the lion (Pl. 19). The upper right arm is drawing an arrow; the other right arms hold *prayoga cakra*, a sword, aiming an arrow, and the lower right placed on the thigh. In the left arms are bow, shield, snake, *sūcihasta* and *ūruhasta*. A big *sūla* is shown to her right and a *parasu* to the left. The edge of the sword is like a saw. Above the head of the Devi is a big parasol.

Yogesvari

To the west of the above Devi is this Goddess seated on a high pedestal. The right leg is rested on the pedestal while the left is placed on footrest. The Devi is four armed but carries no emblem in the upper arms (Pl. 19). The lower right arm is in *vyākhyāna* pose while the left is in *dhyāna mudra*. Evidently the yoga and Jnāna aspects usually associated with Devi. Lalita Tripurasundari is praised as *Mahāyogesvari* in *Lalita Sahasranāma*. She is also called Chinmayī. This is certainly a rare representation of Devi as the teacher of supreme yoga and knowledge. Thus this would provide the latest archaeological limit to which the concept of Devi as *Yogesvari* and *Jnānadhātri* could be assigned. On either side of the Devi are shown her mounts lion and deer.

Durga (*in the Mahamandapa*)

In the front mahāmandapa, Durga is shown in the north eastern direction. The Devi is standing with the right leg on the ground and the left placed on the lion. She is sixteen armed. The following poses or emblems are seen in arms; in the right arms, *kataka*, drawing the arrow, circular disc, *prayoga cakra*, long sword, snake, *ūruhasta* and aiming the arrow; in the left arms are *vismaya*, bow, bell, shield, *parasu*, parrot, *sūci* and touching the bow. Above the bell is shown a conch.

Tripura

As mentioned earlier, Tripurāntaka, Tripurā and Tripurabhairavi are shown in the north western wall of the *mahā prāsāda*. As the Devi is shown in action along with Tripurantaka Siva, we identify her with Tripurā (Pl. 20). Devi in this aspect is shown riding a prancing lion. She is four armed. Bhairavi aspect is shown by the *jatābhāra*. It is interesting to note that inspite of being a terrific deity, Bhairavi is shown here in *dhyāna mudra*. It is well known that in Sakta cult, Bhairavi is adored as Yogesvari. Such a cult was well established before 8th century A.D. and was well known to the Tamil people is seen by this representation. It may not be out of place to mention that by the side of this Bhairavi is a standing Bhairava four armed holding *tādana hasta* and *suci hasta* with a knife in the right arms. The upper left arm is in a peculiar mudra, the upper two fingers are extended (Pl. 21). In the lower arm there is a *Kamandalu*, the upper right arm is drawing the arrow and the lower right is wielding a sword. The upper left holds *vismaya hasta* and the lower left holds a bow.

Tripura Bhairavi

Bhairavi images are portrayed twice in this temple once as Tripura Bhairavi and secondly as Candī-Bhairavi. To the east of the above Tripurantaka and Tripura images (Pl. 20)[7] is shown the seated image of Tripura Bhairavi. She is four armed holding a snake and a long trisula in the right arms. The upper left arm is in suci hasta and above that is shown a *kapāla*. The lower left is *dhyāna* pose. A *parasu* with a long handle is rested on her left shoulder. The Devi is seated on a pedestal and her hanging left leg is rested on a footrest.

Canda Bhairavi

Between the cloistered cell 22nd and 23rd, Bhairavi is shown as Candi in the southern side of the *prakara* wall. The Devi, seated is 8 armed. She holds a *trisūla* in *prayoga* form, in the upper right arm resting, the points on the ground. In the lower left arm are bell, snake and *kataka mudra*. In the left are *vismaya mudra*, *parasu* pointing down, an indistinct emblem, and the lower left in *dhyāna* pose. Above the right arms, is shown a *kapāla*. The Devi wears *jaṭābhāra*.

It is of interest to mention by the side of this Candi is positioned the *saptamāta group*. In later periods also Saptamātas appear along with Caṇḍi as in Triruvakkarai temple.

Saptamātas

Saptamātas occurs only once in the Kailasanatha group and that in the southern direction. They are found between the cells 21 and 22 (Pl. 22). Ganapati and Virabhadra are shown at the head facing west and the rest of the group *i.e.* all the matas are shown facing north, towards the main sanctum. Ganapati, a Valampuri image, is four armed. Virabhadra, wearing *yogapatta* is two armed, holding sword in the left arm and *abhaya* in the right. He is shown with *jaṭābhāra*. All the seven mothers are shown seated on a common seat. Except Indrāni, the rest of the mothers are four armed. Some of them have one of their arms in dhyāna pose, while the others are in various poses holding emblems. All of them are provided with a parasol, one each above their head. Brahmi holds *akshamāla* and *kamandalu;* Mahesvari *sūla* and *pāsa*; The emblems of Kaumari are not clear; Vaishnavi holds *cakra* and *sankha* which are shown separately above. The emblems of Vārāhi are not clear. Indrāni holds *vājra* in her left arm. Cāmunda wields dagger, *sūla*, *kapāla* and *sūci*. The *sula* has a very long shaft.

Jyeshṭā

Jyeshṭā occurs three times in the big temple, once on the southern wall of prākāra to the east of Brahma shrine, where she is shown pot bellyed and with two arms. Secondly she is shown in the north wall of the *ardhamandapa* to the east of Durga (Pl. 23) where also she is shown seated on a pedestal, with two arms. No emblems are noticed in the arms. Behind her are shown the bovine headed son wielding a club and her daughter, one on either side.

The third and somewhat more elaborate figure occurs on the north western part of the *Mahāmaṇḍapa*. She is two armed and seated to her left is her daughter and to the right are two males but not the bovine headed figure; on either side are shown her standards, the crow flag and the broom-stick.

Lakshmi

Lakshmi occurs thrice in the temple once at the northern entrance, secondly at the southern side of the Mahāmandapa and thirdly at the South wall of the *Antarala* part of the *Mahāprāsāda*. In all the instances she is shown facing South. She is seated on a lotus seat, two armed holding lotuses in both the arms. Above her are elephants with vessels. The one on the northern entrance is particularly a beautiful image.

Sarasvati

Sarasvati is also shown thrice in the temple. Firstly on the southern side of the Mahāmandapa; secondly in the South wall of the *ardhamandapa*; in both these cases She is shown facing south. Thirdly she appears on the northern *prākāra* wall, to the west of Vishnu shrine. In this instance she is facing west. In Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram temples, Sarasvati is shown in the Mahāmandapa, facing west. Sarasvati in the Mahāmandapa is four armed, holding *akshamāla* and plam leaves in the right arm and *kundika* and *dhyāna mudra* in the left arms. Sarasvati in the northern *prākāra* is between cells 37 and 38. She is four armed holding *akshamāla* and *abhaya* in the right arms and *kamandalu* and flower in the left. Behind her are shown male attendents.

Tāndava Sakshini

One aspect of Devi, which deserves special attention is the Goddess witnessing the great dance of Siva, which is to assume the greatest significance in Saiva siddhanta Philosophy. On either side of the entrance to the *garbhagṛha*, is shown Siva performing *ūrdhva tāndava*. The sculpture on the southern side is the most well preserved. As this group is without plaster, is representative of the quality and elegance the art of Rājasimha reached. Ūrdhva Tāndava Siva is adored by Brahma and Vishnu to either side. To the left of Siva, on the side wall is figured the finest sculpture of Devi, leaning on a pedestal, watching gracefully the Mahātāndava. What a great figure it is ! Words are inadequate to describe the grace and elegance of this master piece of Pallava art. The universal mother stands with her eyes glancing the master dancer. The *Lalita Sahasranāma*, describes the Goddess as *Mahesvara Mahākalpa Mahātāndava sākshini*. That this was a popular form in much earlier period is seen from the hymns of Appar (early 7th century) when he gives a graphic description of this dance witnessed by the Devi.

...............Māner nokkin Arumāna vān muhattāḷ
amarntur kāṇa amarar ganam mudivananga āḍuhinra Perumāl.

We have seen earlier that in the Thirupparankunram temple, the dance of Siva portrayed in the excavated cave, assignable to late 8th century and in this panel Parvati is also shown as a witness. In the Ananda Tandava form, so popular in chola period, Devi always witnesses the dance as Sivakāmi.

Ambika

In the cloister cells of the Kailasanatha temple of Kanchi, Ambika is shown in the south-east, the fourth from the east. Just as Ganesa, Durga, and Subrahmanya are given separate shrines, so also she occupies a separate shrine in the lay out. Devi is seated with two arms, resting her left on the pedestal and holding the right in *sūci mudra*. At her back stand two female attendents probably Manjula and Menaka holding chouri. To her right is a bearded yogi and to her left is shown a kneeling male figure adoring the Goddess. There is also a female attentent standing by. We have seen earlier that the Devi is constantly adored by Devas, Rishis, and *siddhānganas*. The *Syāmala dandaka*, praises the Devi in the following words—O Devi you manifest in the minds of yogins. *Yoginām mānase dhyōtase.* You are adored by women like Manjula and Menaka. *Manjulā Menakādi Anganā Mānite.* You are adored by Yakshas, Gandharvas, and Siddha women. *Yaksha gandharva siddhāngana maṇḍalairarchite.* The representation of various figures in association with Ambika in the above sculpture should be viewed in this perspective.

Another point of interest that deserve special mention is a separate shrine to Ambika in the Siva temple complex. We will discuss the significance of this shrine when we take up the study of Kamakottam in the sequence.

We will point out that in the Kailasanatha temple of Kanchi, Devi is shown in so many manifestation, that it has no parallel in Indian art and that it also points to the highly developed concepts of Devi cult in early 8th century A.D. Her manifestation as Srimāta, Ambikā, Umā, Kanyā, Kadambavanavāsini, Mātangi, Sumerugiri madhyastā, Durga, Kātyāyani, Tripurā, Tripurabhairavī, Ādibhairavi, Yogesvari, Jyeshṭā, Lakshmi, Sarasvati and Mahātāndava Sākshini are the forms represented here.

SAKTI CULT IN LATER PALLAVA PERIOD

We have discussed the representation of Durga, Caṇḍi Jyēshṭā and Saptamātas in the reign of Rājasimha, with special reference to Kanchi and Mamallapuram. A few select Pallava foundations subsequent to this period will provide us an idea of their worship and cult. We are not exhausting the list, but study only representative sites. The sites selected for this study are Uttaramerur, Thiruttani, Alambakkam and a few others.

Uttaramerur

Uttaramerur village is a Pallava foundation of the time of Nandivarman Pallavamalla and its date is crica 750 A.D. The village seems to have been laid out according to the Vaikhanasa tradition probably the *Marīci samhita*. The village holds a unique position in the history of Tamilnad. The pattern of the distribution of temples and other structures, conform to religious texts and are still in their original positions. There is a *sabha mandapa*, village assembly hall in the centre of the village. The Vishnu temple is in the west; a Durga temple in the north, a Siva temple and a Saptamāta temple in the north east and a Jyeshṭā, in the south. These are not only in these positions today but are referred to as existing in their respective position in the inscriptions.

Sarasvati

The Vishnu temple now called Sundaravarada temple has many interesting features. In the southern side of the main sanctum the *sopāna bhitta.* (parapet of the steps) carry a unique image of Sarasvati. The Devi is seated on a lotus pedestal with four arms, the upper arms carrying *akshamāla* and *kamandalu,* the lower right is in *abhaya* pose and the left placed on the thigh. On either side of the Devi below are two devotees adoring the Goddess. The adorer to the right holds lotus flowers and the left is in *anjali* pose. But what is significant is the two elephants shown above the Devi one pouring water over the head of the Goddess and the other holding the pot (Pl. 24). The representation resembling Gajalakshmi panel is only one of its kind in the south. A bronze said to come from Kashmir region, now in the British Museum, shows Durga seated with her lion below the seat, with two elephants above, pouring water. It is evident that all the three images of Durga, Lakshmi and Sarasvati were shown with water pouring elephants, the Lakshmi shown invariably and the other two occasionally. This would suggest that the representation of the three Goddesses had a common origin and the three had something to do with the mother goddess (earth). The identification Mahālakshmi, Mahāsarasvati and Mahādevi with the Parādevatā, in the *Devi Māhātmya* is also reflected in this representation. *Mahākāli, Mahālakshmi, Mahāsarasvati rūpini Durgāyai namah,* says the *Devi Māhātmya.* We have mentioned that Sarasvati occuring in Sundaravarada temple at Uttaramerur conforms to Vaikhānasa texts. The *Marici samhita* says

> *dakshine sopānasthala bhittau*
> *Dakshinamukhim Vākdevim ca kārayet.*

Durga

In the village of Uttaramerur, is a Durga temple to the north west of the village. The base of the shrine carries a fragmentary inscription, that could be assigned on paleographical grounds to 12th century. The superstructure has been renovated in brick and mortar. But the image of Durga in low relief is a Pallava sculpture of 8th century A.D. The Devi is 8 armed holding usual emblems, with a parrot on her left arm. The buffaloe head is shown below the feet. On either side are devotees seated adoring the Devi. A little above is shown a tiny deer. The sculpture is however crudely and dispropotionably finished, in folk style. It is interesting to find such Durga images being called *Vadavāyil Chelvi* i.e. the Goddess of Northern quarters, in inscriptions.

Saptamātas

In the north eastern corner of the village is located the Saptamāta temple; the base of the temple carries inscriptions of Parthivendravarman and Parantaka chola and must therefore be anterrior to 10th century A.D. The temple is rectangular in plan. Inside are Saptamātas, two sculptures, of Mādari Amman and a Daṇḍu Māri. Of the two

Mādari Amman figures one is a later copy with 8 arms but the earlier one assignable to Pallava period holds *damaru*, sword, *parasu*, *sūla*, shield and *sarpa* in her arms. The Saptamātas and the accompanying Ganesa and Dakshinamurti also belong to 8th century. Inscriptions in the temple record gifts of perpectual lamps, provisions for food offerings, worship etc. for the *Saptamātākkal* also called *Piḍārimars*, from the time of Parantaka chola (10th cent.) The significance of the inscriptions will be discussed in the next chapter.

Jyeshṭā

In the south wertern part of the village a sculpture of Jyeshṭā is lying. The local people fear this sculpture very much and keep it lying upside down. The placement of the sculpture corresponds to prescription in certain texts. Two inscriptions of 10th century also point to the present location of sculpture as a temple of Jyeshṭā (Uttaramerur). The sculpture is in the usual pose with the two attendants. The crow standard and the broom stick standard are also shown.

It is interesting to note that in a village laid out according to Vaishnava texts and in which Vaishnava followers predominated from 8th to 12th century A.D., these Devi temples were installed and continued to be worshipped with great veneration.

Alambakkam

Alambakkam about 30 miles from Thiruchi, was a Pallava foundation in the reign of Dantivarman, 9th century A.D. One of the powerful chieftains under Danti came from this village. In the village is a Vishnu temple, a Siva temple and Saptamāta temple. The Vishnu temple is of the reign of Dantivarman but the superstructure has been reconstructed in later period. In the niches of the *ardhamandapa*, Lakshmi and Sarasvati are shown standing, which is an interesting feature of this temple. The Siva temple seems to be a century later than the Vishnu temple. But the Saptamāta temple to the north east of the village is a Pallava foundation. According to an inscription it was built in the reign of Dantivarman (ARE. 705/1909). However only the base of the shrine is original while the superstructure and the sculptures inside are later ones. It seems from the Vishnu temple which is a big structure, Alambakkam was also a predominantly Vaishnavite settlement and the installation of Saptamātas in the Vaishnavite centre was continued in the 9th century as well, is revealed from this village. A certain Vijayanallulan, a chieftain under Dantivarman hailed from this village of Alambakkam. He was a great builder. At Thiruvellarai near Thiruchi, he dug a big well in the form of Svastika which has survived to this day. On the lintel stones sculptures are carved on all the sides. On one of them we find a Saptamāta group.

During the third quarter of the 9th century two great temples were built in the reign of Aparājita Pallava, one at Takkolam and the other at Thiruttani.

Takkolam

The Jalanātasvāmi temple at Takkolam was wrongly ascribed to the Banas but I have found an inscription of Aparajita on the base of the main shrine and assigned to the reign of Aparajita. The village received the benefaction from Aparajita after whose name it was renamed Aparajita Chaturvedimangalam. The Siva temple contains one of the most delightful sculpture of Durga in its northern *devakoshta* (Pl. 25). The Devi stands on a Mahisha's haad with four arms holding *cakra* and *sankha* in the upper arms and *abhaya* and *kaṭihasta* in the lower arms. We may say that this almost presupposes the conventional representation of Durga in later temples. Another point of interest in this temple is the portrayal of Somaskanda image at the lintal of the entrance.

Thiruttani

The Virattanesvara temple at Thiruttani about 60 miles from Madras was built by one Nambi Appi in the 18th regnal year of Aparajita. This is considered the last of the great Pallava temple and has been discussed in detail by Jouveau Dubrawil in his Pallava antiquities (London 1916). There are three points that are of interest to us in our study. The conventional representation of Brahma, Vishnu, Dakshinamurti, Ganesa and Durga in the devakoshtas as found in Takkolam temple are repeated here and seem to take firm root. Durga in the northern devakoshta (Pl. IV Pallava Antiquities) is four armed holding *cakra*, *sankha*, *abhaya* and *katihasta*. She is shown without the Mahisha's head, but standing in *samabhanga* pose. In the upper part of the *griva* (facade) is shown Umāmahesvara seated on a pedestal. Siva is four armed holding *parasu* and *mṛga* and *abhaya* and *kaṭi*. Umā seated to his left is in two arms holding a lotus in the right and resting the other on the pedestal.

More significant than these, is the group of Saptamātas preserved in the mandapa. The Saptamāta group is complete and are excellent illustrations of Aparājita art. All the *mātas* are four armed and on a pedestal. The following are the emblems in their arms and their mounts shown in their seats.

Brahmi : *Akshamāla*, *kamandalu*, *abhaya* and *kati*-swan (Pl. 26).
Mahesvari : *Parasu*, *mṛga*, *abhaya* and *kati*-bull (Pl. 27).
Kaumari : *Akshamala*, *kundika*, *abhaya* and *kati*-peacock (Pl. 28).
Vaishnavi : *Cakra*, *sankha*, *abhaya* and *kati*-Garuda (Pl. 29).
Varahi : *Cakra*, *sankha*, *abhaya* and *kati*-lion (Pl. 30).
Indrani : *Vajra*, *pasa*, *abhaya* and *kati*-elephant (Pl. 31).
Camunda : *Sūla*, *damaruka*, *abhaya* and *kapāla*-pisaca (Pl. 32).

Before we leave the Pallava period it is necessary to detail some sculptures of Sakti, which are to be assigned to this period on grounds of style.

Durga

Two Durga sculptures to be assigned to the 8th century A.D. illustrated in this study come from Vishnu temples. Pl. 33 is in the Vishnu temple of Mangadu, near Madras. In this Vishnu temple the structures seems to have undergone reconstruction but the main image of Vishnu, a seated figure with Sri devi and Bhudevi by the side is a fine Pallava product of the 8th century. So also the Garuda figure placed facing the main shrine. But in the compound are seen a few Pallava sculptures two of them representing Lokapalas, one representing Siva and another a Durga. A lion base of a pillar is also seen outside. It is not known whether this Durga belonged originally to the Vishnu temple or a Siva temple. If it originally belonged to a Vishnu temple—which is not improbable—it is a good example. It is 4 feet in height, holding *cakra*, *sankha*, *abhaya* and *katihasta*. The village has also yielded a good sculpture of Jyeshṭā, to be assigned to 8th century A.D. The Durga coming from the Ranganatha temple, Thiruvarangam (Pl. 34) South Arcot District, is 8 armed holding the usual emblems; special characteristics are a parrot shown on the right arm and another right arm placed over the head of the devotee, seated by the side holding a dagger in his right and adoring with the left. Another devotee is shown kneeling with Anjali pose. It is possible that this was worshipped originally as an independent deity and later on has found its way to this temple.

Durga, (Pl. 35) is shown standing on a lotus pedestal, with the deer standing at the back. The Devi is four armed wielding *cakra*, *sankha*, *abhaya* and *kaṭihasta*. It is also a fine example of 9th century Pallava art. A crude but low bas-relief Durga (Pl.. 36) standing on the head of a Mahisha with eight arms, wielding usual emblems, is in Perangiyur, near Viluppuram. By the side of it is a beastly looking femenine figure, seated, holding the female organ with her left arm and probably a flower in the right. It is probably a yogini (Pl. 37) attendant on Durga. These two folkish, crude sculptures assignable to 8-9th century A.D., show that the Durga images were made and consecrated not only by royal patrons, but also by common people who could only command the village artists for the execution of the figures.

Two standing figures, both with four arms, with their usual emblems, both to be assigned 8th century A.D. are illustrated as Pls. 38 and 39. One comes from Vallam in Chingelput district and the other is in Periyamarai in Trichi district. An eight armed Durga holding her usual emblems, now preserved in the Madras Museum (Pl. 40), shows the deer standing behind. This has the head of the Mahisha below the feet.

An interesting inscribed Durga stone sculpture is in Tirthamalai, Dharmapuri district (Pl. 41). The Devi standing on the head of Mahisha is eight armed holding, *sankha*, *cakra*, sword, shield, arrow, bow, *kaṭihasta* and probably a parrot. On her back are tunas. An inscription to her right in Vatteluttu characters of 8th century reads *Bhagavati Kuruccṳ̄li Kōḍuḍai*...the last few letters are illegible. It means the Goddess Suli of the mountain. This is perhaps the earliest inscribed Durga, of the Tamil country whose name is given in the epigraph. A similar Durga but belonging to 11th century A.D. (Pl. 42), also carries an inscription which unfortunately is fragmentary. The inscription begins with the name of the chola ruler Rajendra chola I. These two illustrate the fact that inscribed Durga images were also installed from 8th century and were under worship.

SAKTI CULT IN EARLY PANDYA PERIOD (600-900 A.D.)

The Imperial Pāṇḍyas, ruling the southern part of the Tamil country with Madurai as their capital came into power almost at the sametime as the Pallavas in the north. Like the Pallavas, the Pāṇḍyas were also great patrons of art and literature. A great number of cave temples in the southern country owes their existence to their patronage. Unfortunately no structural temple that could be attributed to the early Pāṇḍyas has come to light so for. An assessment of the Pāṇḍyan contribution to Tamil art is yet to be undertaken. A few cave temples bearing excellent sculptures have unfortunately been plastered and it is difficult to asses their artistic achievement. Inspite of these handicaps a few works do remain to tell us their contribution.

Earliest Cave

The earliest Pāṇḍyan rook-cut cave, is at Pillaiyarpatti near Karaikkudi. The inscription inside the excavated cave, to be assigned to 6th ceutury on paleographical grounds gives the name of the architect. The cave itself is dedicated to Siva with an excavated sanctum. The Sivalinga in the sanctum is rock-cut and there are three sculptures, representing Ganesa, Harihara and Lingodbhava. There is no sculpture of Devi in this early rock-cut cave.

Kunrakkudi

There are three rock-cut caves at Kunrakkudi, near Pillaiyarpatti. All the three caves are dedicated to Siva and are to be assigned to 8th century A.D. on grounds of paleography of the inscriptions found in one of them. Among the three caves, the first is an elaborate one with a number of sculptures representing dancing Siva, Harihara, Vishnu, Subrahmanya, Ganesa and Durga. The Durga image is shown standing on the head of Mahisha with eight arms. In the right arms She holds *cakra*, sword, bell and *abhaya* and in the left holds *sankha*, shield, bow, and fire (Pl. 43). A peculiarity is that she holds the fire near her chest. On either side of her feet are shown warriors one on either side, the person to the right, cutting his dead as offering and to the left seated in adoration. Since the sculpture has been plastered we are not in a position to asses its artistic quality.

Thirugokarnam

The cave temple at Thirugokarnam in Pudukkottai, is assigned to the Pāṇḍyas on grounds of style. It is an excavated cave temple, dedicated to Siva. A point of interest to our study is the presense of Saptamātas caverd on the rock by the side of the rock-cut cave. These are excellent sculptures of the 8th century A.D.

Kalugumalai

In Kalugumalai, in Thirunelveli district, is what may be considered the excellent group of Pāṇḍya rock-cut monuments. A rock-cut cave, a monolithic temple and sculptures carved in bas reliefs are found there. The rock-cut cave temple now houses the image of Subrahmanya which is under worship. Over sixty sculptures representing Jain Thirthankaras and Yakshis are carved on the rock face, each with an inscription, recording their dedication. The third monument is the monolith now called Vettuvankoil. Like the Kailasa temple of Ellora, a block has been separated from the parent rock and the monolith carved. The work has been abandoned in the middle due to unknown causes. The sculptures are of outstanding quality but that is of interest to our study is the portrayal of the universal parents Siva and Pārvati in the facade of the *vimāna*. The concept of portraying Umāmahesvara on the *vimāna* was continued in later times as well.

Rajakkalmangalam

A number of sculptures representing various Gods and Goddesses have been brought to light from a village Rajakkalmangalam near Nanguneri in Tinnelveli district. These are excellent sculptures of the 8th century A.D. and are illustrative of the Pāṇḍyan art. More than twenty images of Devi have come to light from this site. We do not know to whom this temple was dedicated. In all probability it was dedicated to Vishnu as Narasimha. The presense of such a large number of Devi figures is striking. We are not able to identify them with any amount of certainity except to say that they represent both Vaishnavite and Saivite images.

Minakshi Temple

In the famous Minakshi temple of Madurai, one group of Saptamātas, assignable to 8th century A.D. are under worship. Originally they were said to have been outside the temple and were brought to the temple within the living memory. Probably they were the Saptamātas of the lay out of the city. The group is not complete, the Kaumari is missing and in its place a Sarasvati image has been added but they do represent classical tradition of the Pāṇḍyas.

Thirupparankunram

Before we close the account of the Pāṇḍyas of the 6-9th century A.D., we will discuss one important cave temple from Thirupparankunram. The main temple of Thirupparankunram, now added as Subrahmanya is an excavated cave temple. The Thirupparankunram was known from Sangam period, as the abode of Subrahmanya. The temple of Subrahmanya in the hill of Parankunram is adored in glowing terms in Paripadel and other sangam poems. But where the original shrine was located we have no knowledge. The present temple was originally excavated for five deities, Siva, Vishnu, Durga, Subrahmanya and Ganesa. But the presiding deity of the temple seems to have been Siva till the end of 15th century. An Amman shrine erected for it calls it Kamakkottamudaiya Nachiyar temple, evidently the name of Pārvati, the consort of Siva. This proves that this was a Siva temple. But Thirumalai Nayak made extensive additions with his portrait just in line with the Subrahmanya shrine. The tradition from the sangam age and the royal patronage to the deity, has made the present temple, predominantly a Subrahmanya shrine.

The cave temple was renovated by one Sāttan Ganapathi alias, Pāṇḍiamirta mangalavaraiyan in the sixth regnal year of Pāṇḍya Maranjaḍaiya who is identical with Parāntaka Nedunjadaiyan whose accession is placed in 762 A.D. Obviously the temple has been in existence before him. We do not know who excavated the cave. However the present shape of the cave temple is mainly due to Sāttan Ganapathi. The cave temple, interesting in many ways, has five sanctums dedicated to Siva, Vishnu, Durga, Subrahmanya and Ganesa. The sanctum of Siva is at the southern side. In the centre of it is a rock-cut Sivalinga and at the back wall is an image of Somaskanda. Opposite to this sanctum is the sanctum of Vishnu who has Bhudevi on one side and a sage probably Mrgandu on the other side. On the back wall of the cave are Durga in the centre with Subrahmanya and Ganesa flanking her. It resembles very much the Trichy lower rock-cut cave where Vishnu, Ganesa, Subrahmanya, Brahma, Durga and Siva are portrayed. The special features of the temple are Surya is not included in the group. While at Trichy the sculptures at the back wall are only panels, here they have sanctums scooped at the back wall. Further the wall adjoining the Siva sanctum has a fine group of sculpture representing Siva dancing the Chatura Tāṇḍava in the centre. To his right is Pārvati standing by the side of a Bull, calmly watching the dance of her master. Above are shown Brahma, Vishnu, and Indra Gods adoring the King of dance. Below them are Ganas playing flute and one of Siva's attendants playing a Drum. To the left of Siva was also a panel which has been covered by later structures but in the visible portion may be seen, Camunda or Kāli, dancing. We will discuss this panel under Dancing Siva and Kāli. The wall adjoining the Vishnu cave carries three images of Vishnu as Ādinātha, Narasimha and Varāha.

Rajarajesvari Durga

A little further down, on the southern side is a fine group of sculpture. In the centre is an excellent image of Devi seated on an elaborate *simhasana* with four arms holding *pāsa*, *ankusa*, *abhaya* and an indistinct emblem. On either side of Devi are shown Surya and Candra above and in the middle rishis one on either side and below are female chouri bearers one on either side. In front of her below are shown four sages. To the right of the Devi on the side wall are celestials and in front of all is shown a royal portrait standing. The shield he holds bears fish emblem and this may probably indicate that the figure is a Pāṇḍya. To the left of the Devi are also celestials and in front of all of them is Mahisha standing in adoration. This group is unique in the history of Indian art. The whole group presents a royal court in which the Devi is seated majestically as king of Kings adored by Devas, rishis, and others. Rightly She is now called Rājarājesvari. A late Tamiḷ work on Thirupparankunram has a dedicatory verse to Ādi Bhuvanesvari. It is not known whether the reference is to this image but the description seems to fit in well with the sculpture.

It is of interest to mention that the inscription recording the renovation to main cave by Sāttan Ganapathi in the reign of Parāntaka Nedunjadaiyan also states that Nakkan Korri, wife of Sāttan Ganapathi, caused the temple Durga and Jyeshṭā to be made.

Jyeshṭā

In the same temple, correspondingly on the other side is a rock-cut sculpture of Jyeshṭā. The Devi is seated on a pedestal with two arms holding a lotus in her right arm and placing her left on the lap of her daughter sitting to her left. Her daughter is also shown as big as Jyeshṭā seated on the pedestal. To the right of Jyeshṭā is her bovine headed son also seated on the same pedestal. Jyeshṭā is shown as an elderly lady but without the pot belly and plunpy appearance. Though it is not an elegant sculpture it is representative of 8th century Pāṇḍya art. The presence of Jyeshṭā here would indicate, what is now worshipped as Rajarajesvari on the corresponding south, is really Durga, caused to be made by Nakkan Korri in the year 768 A.D. It shows that the concept of Devi as the primordial deity seated on a royal throne, receiving worship at the hands of all and that this concept was welknown in the heart of the Pāṇḍya region in 8th century A.D. It is also of interest to note that these two Devi shrines, one of Durga and another of Jyeshṭā were made and consecrated by a lady.

The Sakti cult in later Pāṇḍya period is only an extension of the cult as prevalent in the imperial chola days. It must be remembered that the Pāṇḍya region was virtually under the direct rule of the cholas and their cultural impact is so great of that it virtually took a universal character. We will discuss it after dealing with the chola period.

SAKTI CULT UNDER THE CHOLAS

The Cholas appear on the scene about the middle of the 9th century A.D. The imperial chola line virtually begins with Vijayālaya, who is said to have defeated the Muttaraiyar. His ascendency was signalled by the capture of Tanjore, which is mentioned in both copper plates and lithic records. Literature of the chola period speak of him as a great warrior who received over 96 heroic wounds on his body. The first act af Vijayālaya, on his conquest of Tanjore was the installation of the image of Nisumbhasūdani at Tanjore. The Thiruvālangādu copper plates of Rājendra chola I, states that Vijayālaya having conquered the city of Tanjāpuri installed the image of Nisumbhasūdani, whose lotus feet were adored by the celestials and ruled his country by her grace. The Nisumbhasūdani image installed by Vijayālaya has since been traced in Tanjore. It is now worshipped as Vadabhadrakali near the eastern gate (Pl. 45).

Description

The description of the Devi would indicate that it is one of the unique sculpture in the whole of India, exhibiting the tremendous power with which the Devi shook off the mighty asuras and emerged victorious. Is is also illustrative of the grim determination with which, Vijayālaya chola was able to throw of the yoke of the Pallava power of the north and the menacing power of the Pāṇḍyas of the south. Soon he was to create a power which brought the entire southern India under its firm grip and extended the power even far beyond the seas in the east and penetrated upto the Gangetic plains in the north.

This achievement of Vijayālaya was due to the grace of this Goddess. The reason why Vijayālaya chose this Goddess as his patron deity is clear. In Devi Māhātmya it is said that the King who desires conquest in war should propitiate this Goddess. Vijayālaya's expectations were fulfilled. We may say the great period of Kāli worship begins with the installation of Nisumbhasūdani at Tanjore. Being the patron deity of the Imperial chola ruler, it has influenced the feudatories of the choles to install Kāli images of sufficient magnitude in their village foundations.

Āditya chola, the son and successor of Vijayālaya was a great devotee of Siva. He is said to have studded the banks of river Kaveri with stone temples of Siva. A good number of his foundations have been identified now. The Paluvettaraiyar chieftains who were the powerful feudatories under them, were ruling with Paluvur as their capital. In the reign of Āditya two magnificant temples have been built by one of the Paluvettaraiyar in the village called Perumpaluyur. At the southern end of the village is a temple dedicated to Kāli (Pl. 46). The Devi seated on a pedestal with eight arms, wielding usual emblems, is powerful expression in stone. The asura is shown lying dead at the feet of the Goddess with her head thrown back and the hairs standing erect like flames, the rounded ball like eyes and the upper arm, in the pose of weilding the trident about to pierce the heart of the asura, are indicating the wrath of the Goddess. It is an excellent illustration of the Kāli of the Āditya's period beginning of 10th century A.D.

In between these two excellent Kāli sculptures must be placed another masterpiece of Kāli, now under worship in Thiruvakkarai (Pl. 47). This Devi is also eight armed; her right arms hold a trident, *cakra*, a long bladed sword, and a dagger. The left arms carry *Vismaya mudra*, a big shield, a *kapāla* and *sūcimudra*. The hairs move around. The Devi is shown as giving a howling sound. The right leg is placed on the seat and the left is placed on the ground. No figure is shown on the pedestal. There is a *munda yagnopavīta*. In her right ears the Devi wears a *sisu* as ear ornament and in the left a big *patrakundala*. Unlike the Tanjore Nisumbhasūdani, which is shown as a skeleton, and the Perumpalur Kāli which exhibits strength, the Thiruvakkarai image has supple limbs, and lose flash characterising her softness. The hairs do not move up and stand erect, which becomes a fashion from the reign of Āditya. It moves gently to the side like the Tanjore image. Both the ear ornaments also show close resemblance to the Tanjore image. The sculpture is to be assigned to the reign period Vijayālaya chola. This also illustrates the popularity of the cult in the reign of Vijayālaya.

The bronzes of the age of Vijayālaya are rare. But there are two that can certainly be said to belong to his reign. One from Ambalavanesvaram temple Uraniambalam, is eight armed seated on pedestal. The right arms holds *sūla*, sword, snake and buffaloe's horn. The left arms are in *vismaya*, shield, bell and *kapāla*. Below her left foot is a dead figure with sword and shield. The hairs do not stand erect but fan to the side like the Tanjore and Thiruvakkarai images. There is no *Yagnopavīta* at all for this image. The modelling, pose etc. of this bronze very closely resemble the Thiruvakkarai image.

The Kāli from Arunacalesvara temple Kilaiyūr is seated rather in a stiff pose. She is four armed holding *sūla* in her upper right arm. No embelm is seen in the upper left. The lower right is in *abhaya* and the lower left in *āhūyavarada* pose. There is a *mundayagnopavita*. The left leg is rested on the pedestal and the right is hanging down. The face is full of charm. It is also to be assigned to the reign period of Vijayālaya. Kilaiyūr has yielded besides this Kāli a superb Somaskanda and Tripurāntaka now preserved in the Tanjore Art Gallery, all to be assigned to 9th century A.D.

There are two bronzes to be assigned to the reign of Āditya. An image comes from the Ramanathaswami temple, Ramesvaram. It is a fine image of Kāli, four armed seated, holding *damaruka*, *sūla*, *nāga* and *kapāla* in the four arms. There is a fine *yāgnopavita* of small beads (skull?). The pedestal, however seems to be a late one. A bronze to be assigned to the end of Āditya's reign coming from a different tradition is which is now in the Pannakaparamesvara temple Pannateru, Tanjore district. It is eight armed holding *sūla*, sword, *pasa* and snake in the right arms and *damaruka*, shield, bell and *kapāla* in the left arms. The hairs are standing erect as the Perumpaluvur Kāli. Below her left foot is the lying figure holding sword and shield. A point of interest is the presense of three heads on the pedestal. It is found on all the sides of the pedestal. There is a *mundayagnopavita*. Though the figure is somewhat stiff it is a good illustration of Āditya's period. We have examined these bronzes to show that in addition to stone images excellent images of Kāli were made in bronze in the early chola period.

It is of interest to mention that in the Pallava period, Durga dominates. She is given a separate shrine in villages and towns. Besides we also get Saptamāta temples in the village lay out. But with the advent of Vijayālaya, big images of Kāli were enshrined in the village lay out. Though Durga images were also consecrated, it is Kāli who dominates as illustrated by the Perumpaluvur image. But such Kāli images were consecrated mainly outside the temple complex. Within the Siva temples however Durga, Saptamāta and also Jyeshṭā are found.

Durga is found in 95% of the temples occupying the northern niche of the *ardhamandapa*. She in generally four armed holding *cakra*, *sankha* in the upper arms and *abhaya* and *kaṭihasta* in the lower arms. Six or eight armed Durgas are also found. The weapons in her arms are almost the same in all cases *cakra* and *sankha*, sword and shield, bow and arrow, *abhaya* and *kaṭi*. In the early period, particularly upto the end of 10th century two heroes, one cutting his head and the other seated and adoring the Devi are represented in some illustrations. But this representation is given up later. It is not easy say why it was given up. In the literature of the period like the *Kalingattupparaṇi* and *Takkayāgapparani* we get references to head offerings. The only reason for dropping the representation of head offering is the tendency to formalise everything. Only the main image of God or Goddess came to be represented, shedding the other details.

We will discuss a few Durga images of the Chola period which we have included in this study on account of their artistic and iconographic interest. One of the earliest image is the Durga now in worship in the Kandiyur temple (Pl. 49). It is an excellent figure of the age of Vijayālaya. The Devi is standing, four armed holding *cakra* and *sankha* in the upper arms. The lower right arm is in *varada* pose, an unusual representation. The left is in *kaṭihasta.* No Mahisha's head is shown below the feet. The broad breast-band and heavy undergarment are characteristic of the age. It is one of the finest specimen of Durga in Tanjore region. Douglas Barret in his 'early chola architecture', rightly points out that there is perhaps no example of early chola sculpture of greater scale and authority but assigns it to the second phase (940-970), but seems to be early 885 A.D.

Almost to the same period must be assigned Pl. 50 coming from Tyagarāja temple Thiruvarur. The Devi is eight armed, standing in an attractive *tribhanga* pose on the Mahisha's head. The right arms carry *cakra,* sword, *abhaya* and *varada*; the left arms hold *sankha,* bow, shield and *kaṭihasta.* To the left of the Devi is a *sūla* planted with a long handle. A point of interest is the presense of parrot on a stand to her right, like a standard. The Devi wears a broad breast-band and *channavīra.* The sculpture is also a fine example of the age of Vijayālaya. In contrast to this is another image of Durga, preserved in the same temple (Pl. 51). It was made almost one hundred years later, in the 2nd regnal year of Rājarāja (987 A.D.) Perhaps the best representation of Durga of the first quarter of the 10th century A.D. are to be seen at the Nagesvara temple Kumbakonam and the Brahmapurisvara temple at Pullamangai. The Pullamangai image reflects almost metallic quality. Two excellent specimens of the middle 10th century A.D., come from Thiruvaduturai and Punjai (Pl. 52). Both are masterpieces, each unique in its own way, in its form and expressive quality. In Punjai, we have the mounts lion and deer shown above, which is a survival of early features. The Durga image, which we recovered from Debris is a good example of the third quarter of 10th century. The temple was built in the reign of Uttamachola from (970-985 A.D.). All the sculptures discussed above are in the Devakoshtas of the *vimānas,* except the Pl. 49 from Kandiyur, which probably adorned a bigger temple which has since disappeared. An illustration of the age of Rājarāja is also included in this study. This however belongs to a temple erected in the early years of Rājarāja's reign and hence bears the characters of the earlier phase. In the great temple of Tanjore, the image is found in the northern niche of the Mahāmandapa. The same position is occupied in the Gangaikondacholapuram as well. A fine sculpture of Durga which occupied the niche of the Darasuram temple is missing. The image now in Palaiyarai temple is probably the same, where it is placed inside the mahāmandapa. The imperial temples built by the Chola emperors, bear Durga in the Mahāmandapa.

At this stage it is also necessary to state that Lakshmi and Sarasvati are shown in the south and north of the Mahāmandapa, facing west. We have seen that Durga, Lakshmi, Sarasvati and Jyeshṭā are placed in the Mahāmandapa of the Kailasanatha temple of Kanchi, built in the beginning of 8th century A.D. The association of Devi images in the Mahāmandapa is continued to the middle of 11th century after which the practice seems to have been given up. Practically the *mahāmandapas* that came up later, bear no sculpture at all.

The chola period beginning from 1100 A.D., witnessed a new movement in temple building activity. It manifested itself in the form of monumental Gopuras. The temple which have assumed greater proportions like the Chidambaram temple were enlarged on great scale. Elaborately planned gopuras came to be built and in them a number of Sakti images were installed. In the entrance were always placed Durga on one side and Bhairava on the other.

Chidambaram Gopuras

The best illustrations of the Gopuras of the chola period are at Chidambaram. All the four were built within one hundred and fifty years circa 1100 A.D. All the four Gopuras of the Chidambaram temple carry images of Durga. These are generally four armed standing erect holding *sankha cakra*, *abhaya* and *kaṭihasta*. Durga is the protector of the Durgams (forts) and it is in this sense probably she is positioned at the entrance of the fortification (enclosure).

Besides the entrance, various aspects of Devi are portrayed at the niches of the Chidambaram Gopuras. One of the most striking representations in all the Chidambaram gopuras is the Tripurasundari images striding on the back of Mahishāsura. The portrayal is unique and what is interesting is the label inscription on one of them, giving the name of the Devi as Tripurasundari (Pl. 54). The Devi is shown with 18 arms (*ashtādasabhuja*). The Devi is in an attacking pose bearing multiple arms. With her right leg she is pressing the back of the Mahishāsura. The left leg is pressing the leg of the asura. Caught underneath the legs of the Devi, the asura is crying out; his head turned to the right shows the pathetic fall. The Devi's lion is shown at the back. In the portrayal of Durga Mahishāsuramardini, this is a great and bold conception, we meet with after the period of the Pallavas. What is more significant is that the Durga Mahishamardini was worshipped as Tripurasundari in 12th century. The label inscription helps us in determining the aspect. In addition to Tripurasundari, Durga is also portrayed with an inscription as Durga devi.

Another interesting portrayal in the gopuras of Chidambaram is Bhadrakāli, which is seen in the west, south and north gopuras. The figure in the western gopura (Pl. 55) has a label inscription reading Bhadrakāli. James Harle gives a good account of the three images of Chidambaram gopuras. The Devi is eight armed in all the three instances, but the emblems held in the arms are preserved in the images of the northern gopura only. The emblems are *sūla*, *nāgapāsa*, sword and *damaru* in the right arms and *agni*, shield, *vajra* and *kapāla* in the left arms. Kāli here appears as *Sumbha* Nisumbhasūdani in which form she was popular in the chola period. It is different from the Mahishāsuramardini aspect.

The sculpture in the western gopura is particularly an excellent sculpture of Kāli of the later chola period. The Kāli is shown with *ūrdhvakesa*. A number of snakes are seen on her hair. *Sisukundala* in the right and *patrakundala* with an owl in the left are shown as in early sculptures. The *asura* is shown lying below the feet of the Devi in the same way as in the Tripurasundari image. A gana is at the back. Two female attendants are shown flanking the niche.

Besides the representation of Durga, Tripurasundari, and Bhadrakāli, other forms of Sakti also occur in Chidambaram gopuras. A significant group among them is the representation of the three Saktis, so familiar to the Saiva Siddhantins, *viz*. Iccā Sakti, Jnāna Sakti and Kriyā Sakti. Among the three, two bearing label inscriptions, Jnānasakti and Kriyāsakti have survived. Probably the third one was also portrayed but it is not yet identified. The Gopura built about a hundred years later at Thiruvanaikkaval in the reign of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya, has all the three Saktis in the lower niches of the gopura.

The Jnānasakti and Kriyāsakti images in the Chidambaram Gopuras are two armed, both holding what looks like chouri. Commenting on them, James Harle rightly observes "The even distribution of these images among the four gopuras and the almost identical position which they occupy, show that they definitely belong to the iconographical plan of the gopura".

Lakshmi and Sarasvati (Pl. 56) are also portrayed in the lower tier of the gopura.

Other forms of femenine deities which find prominent place in the gopuras are Ganga (Pl. 57) and Yamuna. The representation of Ganga and Yamuna, at the entrance can be traced back to the Pallava period. In the Mahendravarmesvara grham, in front of the Kailasanatha temple of Kanchi, Ganga and Yamuna are portrayed at the entrance to the *garbhagṛha*. In later gopuras, these Goddesses are figured at the entrance often portrayed as holding meandering creapers. Ganga will stand on Makara and Yamuna on turtle. In Chidambaram, the Ganga is shown without the makara and Yamuna is shown on turtle (Pl. 58).

Tanjore Gopuras

It is necessary to mention here that in the two Gopuras of Tanjore erected in the reign of Rājarāja, we do not come across the portrayal of these Saktis. Various aspects of Siva and his exploits are portrayed in the base of the inner Gopura. In the southern side of the innerside of the inner Gopura, a few sculptures representing Saptamātas are portrayed. They are in moving stance participating in some exploits which are not very clear. Some of them are completely worn out. The absense of Sakti images in the Gopuras of Rājarāja in 1000 A.D., would indicate that the philosophic concepts, relating to Iccā, Jnāna, Kriyā Saktis and also other Saktis, like Sānti Sakti, Sāntiyātita Sakti have not yet emerged into iconographic concepts in 11th century and if they had, they had not yet become dominant factors in the sculptural dispositions. However we have seen in the chapter on Thirumandiram, which we have assigned to 8th century A.D., the concepts of Iccā, Jnāna and Kriyā Saktis are well developed. Why it has not developed in the iconographical side is difficult to say. But what we are able to say at this stage is that the various Saktis as explained in Saiva Siddhanta philosophy, are given iconographic form and representation in the 12th century A.D.

Darasuram Gopura

The temple at Darasuram, near Kumbakonam was built by Rājarāja Chola II. Though this is smaller than the two big temples of Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram, it is a fine example of the 12th century A.D. It has many special characters.

This was built after the great Tamil works *Kalingattupparani* by Jayankondar and *Periya Puranam* by Sekkilar were composed, directly due to the patronage of Chola rulers. We have discussed both these texts earlier. We have shown how the worship of Durgā-Kāli was extolled to a great extent in *Kalingattupparani.* Many scholars from Āryadesa, and Gauḍadesa came and settled in Tamil country also due to the patronage of Imperial Chola, like Rājarāja I and Rājendra I. With them they have brought the Tantric cult with all its concepts. Kulottunga chola I was himself a descendant of the Eastern Chalukyar live. He spend the early part of war campaigns in Kalinga and won a great battle. He was influenced by the Tantric cult of the region. All these royal conquests resulted in cultural contacts particularly in the royal courts. Thus the temple at Darasuram (Rājarājapuram) erected by Rājarāja II, imbibed the Tantric thoughts that were current then. We have mentioned that atleast four *Paranis* were composed within one hundred years, which shows the impact of the cult. Ottakkuttan a great poet who adorned the court of Rājarāja II, has sung his *Takkayāgapparani* as soon as the Darasuram temple was built. We have discussed this text also separately. As such the Darasuram temple is an important monument for the study of Tantric cult in 12th century A.D.

This was also the time when great works on Saiva Siddhanta system were being composed. All these are reflected in the monumental temple of Darasuram. We have discussed two important representations, Tripurā and Vishnumāya appearing in the Airavatesvara temple of Darasuram, separatly.

We will discuss here the representations of Saktis in the outer Gopura of Darasuram temple. The outer gopura was in all probability built by Rājarāja II. The superstructure has crumbled. The lower part, built of stone, carries a number of niches, a good number of them carrying label inscriptions. In the northern niches of the Gopura (Western side) the following Saktis are mentioned.

Brahmāni, and
Vaishnavi.

Correspondingly on the southern side are the following Saktis.

Sāntiyātita Sakti,
Sānti Sakti, and
Vidyā Sakti.

In the eastern face we get Durgādevi, Sridevi and Sarasvati.

We may remember that in Chidambaram Gopuras, built almost at the same time, Durga, Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Tripurasundari, Bhadrakāti and Iccā Sakti, Jnāna Sakti and Kriyā Sakti are figured. But here we get a different tradition. The three Saktis Brahmāni, Vaishnavi and Rudrāni appear. The five Saktis generally adored as *kalās* in modern times are mentioned as Saktis as Sāntiyātita Sakti, Sānti Sakti etc. Unfortunately in a number of niches the sculptures are missing and in others they are lying covered. It is not possible to asses their iconographic variations. It is just of interest to say that the Saiva Siddhanta which emerged in this century in its full form was not only represented in philosophic thoughts and literature, but was also represented visually in sculptures giving a permanence.

The outer gopura at Tribhuvanam, near Kumbakonam, was built by the last of the great Chola rulers, Kulottunga III. The temple itself is called after him as Tribhuvanaviresvaram, but unfortunately most of the sculptures of the Gopura have disappeared and it is difficult to arrive at any conclusion. One Gopura, which is of interest, is Sundara Pandya Gopura at Thiruvanaikkoil probably built by Jatavarman Sundarapandya in the later half of the 13th century. J.C. Harle has discussed this Gopura also in his work. If follows the Chidambaram Gopuras in the lay out and distribution of images. However one significant inclusion is the pair of Lakshmi and Sarasvati at the entrance. The Gopura at Madurai has also last many of its sculptures.

In the Vijayanagar reign particularly in the period of Krishnadevaraya 16th cent. A.D., great Gopuras became the norm of the day. Krishnadevaraya himself was responsible for lofty towers at places like Kalahasti, Kanchi, Chidambaram and Thiruvannamalai. At Chidambaram, he rebuilt the northern Gopura. But the sculptures which were originally in the Gopura have been reused and they follow the pattern of the other Gopuras. But in other places like Ekambaranatha temple of Kanchi, only feeble attempts are made to portray images in the niches of the Gopura. Still in later periods no sculpture was included in the lower niches of the Gopuras.

In Bronzes

The contribution of the Chola dynasty to the art of Bronze casting is well known. It is not an exageration to say that the very large number of bronzes that are found in various temples are as a result of direct patronage given by the Chola rulers and their queens. Innumberable references are met with in inscriptions to the setting up of bronze images by the Chola rulers themselves. Inscriptions begin to appear from the reign of Parāntaka, in large numbers relating to metal icons. However the peak period in the art was reached in the reign of Rājrāja I. We have discussed earlier some outstanding pieces of Kāli images in metal. Some more images of Kāli are in the Madras Museum collection. The Kāli from Senniyan Viduthi is a welknown example, bearing a dedicatory inscription on the pedestal which is however worn out.

Durga images in bronze are not rare though we have not come across any image which could be assigned to the reign of the Vijayālaya, Āditya or even Parāntaka. We have illustrated in this study three early Durga images, all of which are to be assigned to the reign of Rājarāja I. The fine image of Durga (Pl. 59) is in the Tanjore Art Gallery while Pl. 60, is in the Dharmapuram Mutt collections. And yet a third one comes from Vadagur. All the three bear youthful countenance and carry *cakra* and *sankha* in the upper arms and *abhaya* and *kaṭihasta* in the lower arms. Most of the Durga images of the Chola period followed this pattern.

In the great temple of Tanjore a bronze image of Durga Paramesvari, by a certain Vadugan in the reign of Rājarāja. The image has not survived.

A significant aspect that deserves special mention in Bronze image is the setting up of Devi icons as consorts of various aspects of Siva. When various images of Siva were gifted, the consorts always referred to as *Umaparamesvari* was also made and gifted. In the temple of Rājarāja at Tanjore many Siva bronzes were gifted with their consorts Umaparamesvari. The term Umaparamesvari is very significant. She is now considered the supreme Goddess.

It is shown elsewhere that the erection of monumental temples to Devi as Kamakkottam became very popular from the reign of Kulottunga I. Naralokavira, one of the generals of Kulottunga I, and his son Vikrama Chola, was a great builder. He has made extensive additions to Chidambaram and Thiruvadigai temples. Sri B. Natarajan in his recent work on the city of "the cosmic dancer" writes on the Amman shrine of Chidambaram as follows.

"There was no independent Amman shrine in any of the South Indian temples till the days of Kulottunga I. It seems very likely that the Sivakamisundari Amman shrine built by the later Cholas was the first among independent Amman shrines" Further he says "Epigraphical evidence indicates that the construction of this shrine should have been undertaken by Naralokavira in the reign of Kulottunga and Vikrama Chola and it seems to have been completed in the days of Kulottunga II. Final additions were made in the time of the Pallava Kopperunjinga and Kulottunga III."

The Vimana called Kamakkottam was already in existence in the reign of Kulottunga and Naralokavira built an enclosure, a *mandapa* and a *dvārasāla*

Tasmin devyās sikhariduhituh
Kāmakōshta sthitāyāh
Prākārajyām api dayitam asau
Kliptavān Mandapamca

Naralokavira's inscription is both in Sanskrit and Tamil. In both the epigraphs, the additions carried out to the Kamakōṭṭa alone are mentioned but no reference to the construction of the Amman shrine. We therefore conclude that the Amman shrine was in existence before the time of Kulottunga I, but it received great benefactions during his reign and his successors. Naralokavira's contribution were as mentioned earlier the construction of the enclosure, a dancing hall and the *sālā* in front of the shrine. He also gave a *pitambara* to the Goddess. Another gift was provisions for milk and oil for offering to the Goddess. These were to be offered to the universal Mother and distributed to children which he considered as a form of worship (S11. IV. 225). The enclosure erected by Naralokavira is still in existence. It is not merely an enclosure but a monumental art. In the base of the enclosure are excellent sculptures, of dancers both males and females in a row. They play on various musical instruments and dance in delightful poses. (Pls. 61, 62 and 63). But a matter of interest is that the female dancers are shown in a number of cases carrying *damaru* and *sūla*. The worshippers of the Devi are said to come to the temple of the Goddess, dancing in ecstasy to the beat of *damarukas* (*Kalingattupparani*). The Portrayal of women with *sūla* and *damaruka*, dancing in ecstasy, is specially associated with the Devi cult.

From the time of Kulottunga I, it was a great period in the history of Sivakami temple of Chidambaram. Vikrama Chola the son and successor of Kulottunga gifted many valuables to this shrine.

Kulottunga III, was a great devotee of the Goddess. He covered the Kāmakkottam shrine, the enclosure and the entrance Gopura of the Amman shrine with gold. He also covered the *prākāra harmya* with gold. But as the present main shrine has undergone rebuilding, we are unable to come to any conclusion on its original lay out. As it is, it is in the form of the other Vimana of Nataraja and is rectangular in shape. The three main devakoshtas carry the three saktis.

Tillaikkāli Temple

An important temple which needs study in this connection is the Tillaikkāli temple at Chidambaram. It was built in the reign of Kopperunjinga, a turbulant Pallava Chieftain in the middle of 13th century A.D. This Kāli temple is closely related to the Natarāja shrine, according to local legends. As it not only falls within the later Chola period but also important for the study of Kāli worship in 13th century A.D. we are discussing it here in detail.

According to an inscription, fifty *Kulis* of land were purchased by one Cholakkon, a local officer of Kopperunjinga, in his 8th regnal year for building the temple of Piḍāriyār, the temple Campus, and the street for the temple servants (ARE. 401/1903). According to epigraphs the main deity of this temple is called *Tillaivanam Uḍaiya Paramesvari.* The temple is a rectangular *Sāla Vimāna* with an *Ardhamandapa* in the front. It carries *devakoshtas* in the three main sides of the Vimāna and also the *ardhamandapa.* The temple faces west. The main niches of the vimāna carry Brahmāni in the north, Vaishnavi in the east (back) and Rudrāni in the south. The niches of the ardhamandapa carry Durga in the north and Sarasvati in the south. Guarding the entrance are Kāli's dvārapālikas.

The main deity is seated with four heads and four arms, holding *akshamala* and *sūla* in the upper arms and *pānapātra* and lotus in the lower arms. A few peculiar characters of this image needs mention. That She has four heads is unique and on account of it is now called Brahma Cāmuṇḍā. That She is the presiding deity of knowledge is indicated by the *akshamala.* Her Kāli aspect is emphasised by the *kapāla* held in her main right arm. Otherwise she is a *soumya devatā*, wearing *jaṭāmakuṭa*, with none of the terrific signs portrayed. She is probably adored here, as Manonmani, the *Parādevatā.* Below her feet is shown lying figure like the *Preta.* A bronze image of this deity which is an exact replica of the main stone image is under worship now as the processional deity but the bronze is a late figure probably belonging to 18th century A.D.

But an excellent bronze (Pl. 65) which could be assigned to the 11th century is also under worship in the temple. It is four armed, seated on a lotus pedestal over a *bhadrāsana.* The upper two arms are in *kaṭaka* pose but without the emblems. The main right holds *kapāla* and the left is in the form of *kaṭaka.* She is with one head wearing *jaṭāmakuṭa.* Below her hanging right leg is the *preta* lying flat. This is a very fine representation of the *saumya* form of Kāli and rightly she was called the Supreme Goddess of Tillaivana, *Tillai vanam uḍaya Paramesvari.* In all probability the original deity before the reconstruction of the shrine by Kopperunjinga, was of this iconographic form. The four headed Devi was installed by Kopperunjinga.

The iconography of the *koshta devatas* are as follows. Brahmani four armed, seated with three heads; holds *akshamala, kamandala, abhaya* and *āhuyavarada.* Vaishnavi—seated, four armed holding *cakra, sanka, abhaya* and *varada.* Rudrāni—four armed, seated holding *Parasu,* deer, *abhaya,* and *ābūjavarada.* Durga in the *ardhamandapa* is six armed, standing on the head of Mahisha holding *cakra, sanka,* bow, arrow, *abhaya* and *kaṭihasta.* Saraswati—holding *vīna* in her arms. The dvārapālikas are two armed holding *kapāla* and flower.

Darasuram Amman Shrine

Another great temple built in the 13th century to the Goddess is the Amman shrine at Darasuram which is an elaborate structure luckily well preserved and may be cited as a fine example of Amman shrine of 13th century. The structure is *Sāla* type on a high *upapitha.* It was probably built by Jatavarman Sundarapandya in 13th century. The main sanctum has niches on all the three sides carrying the three Saktis, Iccā Sakti, Jnāna Sakti and Kriyā Sakti, all the three shown standing with *parasu, sūla, abhaya* and *varada.* (Pls. 67, 68). They are flanked by female chouri bearers. The front mandapa has also niches but they are empty. The entrance steps carry superbly carved rider motives. The *dvārapālikas* are shown holding sword and shield (Pls. 69, 70).

A few representations of Saktis which can not be discussed in the chronological order, but belong to the Chola period need also special mention.

Ashtamatas

In the Siva temple of Thiruvaiyaru is preserved a group of Saktis carved on a single slab (Pl. 71). There are altogether nine figures in the group. All the figures are shown seated on lotus pedestals, with only two arms holding what looks like a lotus flower with a long stem in the right arm and placing the left on the thigh. All of them are shown with a lying *preta* below their feet. The central figure is Siva seated majestically. On either side of him are shown four Devis on eitherside. The first seven seem to be the Saptamātas. Kaumari is shown seated immediatly to the right of Siva and can be identified with her head dress. The Devi immediately to the left of Siva is Varahi also identifiable by her Varaha face. The tall cylinderical kirita in the next Devi, suggests She is Indrani. Camuṇḍa is clearly seen by her *kesabhara* and naga breast-band. Obviously the first three represent Brāhmi, Māhesvari and Vaishnavi. The last one is probably Lakshmi. The representation of Ashtamatas or what may be called Ashta Saktis is rare in South India. In northern India the representation is quite common. In some representations in Northern India, Siva is shown in the centre and four Mātās each on either side. An interesting example is the famous Ravan Padi cave at Aihole where Siva dances in the centre and is flanked by Saptamātas and Pārvati. In Thiruvaiyaru panel also, Siva is shown in the centre, but what is significant is the presense of *preta* below the feet of all the images which shows it is essentially a Tantric cult-image.

Tantric Cult Images Brought from Other Lands by the Cholas

Perhaps an important aspect of Tantric ideas, permeating the Chola country in the 11th and 12th centuries A.D. are reflected in the sculptures brought as war rophies by the Imperial Chola rulers from the Chalukya and Kalinga regions. A good number of sculptures from other regions brought into the Chola country are still preserved in and around Gangaikonda-cholapuram.

Kalinga Sculptures

A group of three sculptures (Pls. 72, 73 & 74) found in Sengamedu about a mile to the east of Gangaikonda-cholapuram are excellent specimens of Kalinga art. Two of them are Bhairava images, one broken. They are four armed, standing figures holding *sūla*, *damaru*, sword and *kapāla*. Siva is shown naked with a string of skulls going upto his ankle. In the waist are shown *kinkinis*. On to his right is Bhairavi, an ematiated figure holding a severed head. To the right is an ematiated male figure. A superb image of Bhairavi (Pl. 74) is also in the same place. The Devi is shown naked with eight arms and holds *sūla*, a snake, a sword and what looks like a fore arm, in her right arms. In the left arms are *damaruka*, *katvānga*, *munda* and probably *kapāla* (this is broken). Below the *munda* is a jackel jumping up; to her right is a male figure standing. These three sculptures are excellent specimens of Kalinga art and are to be assigned to 8-9 century A.D. Probably they were brought as war trophies during Rajendra's expedition to gangetic plain. The bringing of these images should not be viewed in isolation.

In the reign of Rājendra, a temple was erected to Yogesvara and Yogini in Kolar. The emphasis on Bhairava and Bhairavi (Kāli) cult, that we witness from the second half of the 11th century A.D. should be attributed to the bringing of this cult images from Kalinga, where Tantric element was at its height. An exact replica of the Bhairavi but executed by a local artist is also in the same place which shows that the Bhairavi cult has taken deep roots in the Chola Capital.

Nolamba and Chalukya Sculptures

Besides this fine group there are a number of other Durga images. A Nolamba sculpture now preserved in Manmedu, a part of Gangaikonda-cholapuram (Pl. 75), represents Durga Mahishamardini. Another similar figure is under worship in the great temple of Gangaikonda-cholapuram itself. These represent Nolamba tradition flowing into the Chola country. A remarkable sculpture representing Durga Mahishamardini brought from the Chalukyan region is preserved in the Virareddy street, a part of Gangaikonda-cholapuram. Among the war trophies brought by the imperial Cholas, Durga and Kāli images are more in number, which suggest that the Chola soldiers and rulers attached great importance to these cult images.

SOMASKANDA

Pallava Period

One of the most important representations in Pallava times is the Somaskanda panel in the back wall of the Sanctum of Siva temples. In the decidedly Mahendra's cave temples (7th century A.D.) the Somaskanda image is not noticed. However, we get them in the monuments, which are decidedly of the reign of Rājasimha (Early 8th century A.D.) as in the temple of Kailasanatha at Kanchi, Talagirisvara at Panamalai and the shore temple at Mamallapuram. In these cases, Siva is shown seated on a pedestal with four arms and by his side is shown Devi also seated, two armed with the baby Skanda seated on her lap. Somaskanda is shown in the following temples at Mamallapuram, Dharmarāja ratha, Mahishamardini cave, Rāmānuja mandapa, Sea-shore temples, Mukundanāyanār temple, and the Saluvankuppam cave.

In Monoliths

In the Dharmarāja ratha Somaskanda is shown in the sanctum of the third floor. In the centre of the back wall, a shallow niche is carved where Siva seated with Devi and Skanda, is shown. Siva is four armed, holding a snake in the upper right arm and an indistinct emblem in the left. To his left is Pārvati seated turned towards her lord with the baby in her lap. The Devi shown as a young mother is two armed, holding the baby in her left arm and the right is probably bent. Flanking this niche are shown Brahma to the right and Vishnu to the left, both four armed, adoring the main deity. The standing figures of Brahma and Vishnu are almost of the same size as that of Siva. Besides the Dharmarāja ratha no other monolith in Mamallapuram carries the image of Somaskanda.

In Caves

Among the cave temples at Mamallapuram the most important to carry this representation is the famous Mahishamardini cave. In the central sanctum of this cave is seen the biggest Somaskanda in Mamallapuram. Siva and Pārvati are shown seated on a pedestal, Pārvati with Skanda on her lap. Below their seat is shown a big Nandi. On either side of Siva in the same panel are shown Brahma and Vishnu. In the centre of the sanctum there is a socket to receive a linga and traces of its *Yonipitha* are visible. The other cave temple to have had Somaskanda, which seems to have been chiselled off at a later date is Rāmānuja mandapa. The traces of Somaskanda at the back wall of the sanctum are visible. But we will not say anything about its form as only faint traces exist.

It must be admitted that two temples exist here, one a cave temple and another a monolith bearing inscriptions in which they are called *Isvaragrhas*, i.e., Siva temples and they are Dharmarāja mandapa and Ganesa ratha. There are no Somaskanda panels in these two temples.

The Atiranacanda cave temple at Saluvankuppam, has three Somaskandas, one in the sanctum and two on the back wall of the front mandapa, one on either side of the sanctum. The Panels conform to the general pattern, and the repetition of this in the same temple shows that it was a favourite theme with the creator. In this connection two points deserve special mention. In the inscription of the same cave temple, the King says "let Pasupati ever reside in this temple with Parvati and Guha". The inscription which incidentaly is a foundation epigraph, points to the fact that the Somaskanda panel, was carved with the temple. It is also significant that king Rājasimha who caused these monuments, likened himself to Guha, the son of Paramesvara.

In Structural Temples

The following structural temples built by Rājasimha carry Somaskanda panels; Kailasanatha at Kanchi, Talagirisvara at Panamalai, the Sea-shore temple and Mukundanayanar at Mamallapuram, and the Vedagirisvara temple at Thirukkalukkunram. The temples built by Rājasimha's son Mahendravarman at Kanchi also carry this panel. Some of the temples built almost at the same period at Kanchi, like Muktesvara, Matangisvara, Piravatana, Iravatana, and Airavatesvara also carry this panel.

There is a cave temple dedicated to Siva, Vishnu and Subrahmanya at Mamallapuram, now called Trimurti cave. In this cave the central shrine is dedicated to Siva. Here Siva is shown standing in *samabanga*, with four arms. Siva holds *parasu* with the upper right arm, *akshamāla* with the upper left; lower right is in *abhaya* and the lower left in *kaṭihasta*. He is flanked by ganas on top and devotees below. In front of the image and in the centre of the sanctum is a Sivalinga. The image of Subrahmanya in the northern sanctum and that of Vishnu in the southern sanctum are also of the same size and posture as Siva in the central sanctum. This indicates that besides Somaskanda panel, Siva is shown sometimes also in his iconic form at the back wall of the sanctum. This we have three different modes of representing Siva in the Sanctum in Pallava temples: (a) Only a Sivalinga in the centre of the centre of the sanctum, (b) a Sivalinga in the centre and Somaskanda at the back wall, and (c) Sivalinga in the centre with a standing form of Siva at the back wall of the Sanctum.

At Melacheri near Gingee, an excavated cave is found bearing an inscription which calls the temple *Sikhari Pallavesvara grham.* (K.R.S. 116). The name of the maker is called king Chandrāditya who also had the title Pallava. Inspite of the fact that the temple is called Pallavesvara grham, K.R. Srinivasan holds that it was not excavated by any Pallava King. He also states that the appellation Āditya is common to Chalukya name. This is not correct because the appellation Āditya is also found occuring for Pallavas. Paramesvaraverman is called Somāditya. Rājasimha is called Pallavaditya. and Yugāndāditya. The temple is certainly a Pallava foundation as its bears the name Pallavesvaragriham. Who this Pallava king Chandrāditya who also bore the title Sikhari is not clear. May be this was excavated in the 8th century A.D. The important fact that deserves mention about this temple is the rock-cut linga in the centre of the sanctum. The linga is cylinderical and the Āvudaiyār octoganal in shape. An image of Pārvati is carved in a niche, in the northern wall of the *mandapa*. Carving of rock-cut lingas inside the sanctum of the Siva temple in the 7th century, in the Pallava territory and by the Pallavas is thus established.

In the far south a number of excavated caves have been brought to light. A number of these caves like the ones at Pillaiyarpatti, Thirumeyyam, Kunrakkudi and other places show that rock-cut lingas were excavated along with the cave temples. We have one important cave temple which is of historic interest. It is the main temple at Thirupparankunram. This was excavated in the reign of Pāṇḍya ruler Parantaka Nedunjadaiyan by one of his general.

In the inscription the temple is called Isvaragrham. But it is dedicated to five Gods namely Siva, Vishnu, Subrahmanya, Ganapathi and Durga. We will have more to say about this temple later but what is significant is the presense of Somaskanda at the back wall of the sanctum of the Siva shrine. Somaskanda panels, at the back wall of the sanctum seem to have assumed significance in 18th century A.D.

Kapālesvara and Kapālika

Inside the Ekambaresvara temple of Kanchi there is a shrine bearing Pallava features. It has of late, been plastered and renovated but fortunately the interior is intact. Inside the sanctum, at the back wall are shown Siva and Pārvati seated, like the Somaskanda panels. The Skanda is not present in the panel. The representation of Devi and Siva are also unique. Both of them are shown with four arms and holding identical emblems in their arms. In their upper right arm they hold *trisula* with a long handle; the upper left holds a *khatvanga*, a bone topped by a skull. It has a flying cloth suggesting *katvangadhvaja*. In the lower right arm is shown a long bladed sword and in the left is *kapāla.* It is very interesting to see both Siva and Devi holding the same emblems particularly sword, *kapāla* and *khatvanga* which suggest their association with the Kapalika cult. Both Siva and Devi are shown with *jatamakuta.* Undoubtedly the images are from the hands of the Pallava artists and are assignable to 8th century A.D. That Kanchi was a great centre of Kapalikas even in 7th century, is known from *Mattavilāsa prahasana* of Mahendra. The presense of this group is thus interesting.

Umāmahesvara

In the chola period, the representation of Somaskanda has taken a different form. In some temples of the chola region Umāmahesvara images are found instead of Somaskanda. The date of these temples are not easy of determination as they have undergone renovations. The following are the few places where such representations are seen. Thirunallur, Srikali, both in Tanjore District, Thiruvadigai in South Arcot, Ekambaresvara in Kanchipuram, Thiruverkadu in Chingleput District and the Siva temple at Vilakkanampundi also in the Chingleput district. The Siva temple at Thiruvadigai was a Pallava foundation, renovated by Nrpatunga in 9th century and was further renovated in the 14th century A.D. The walls of the *garbhagrha* are built of brick and so the Umāmahesvara image is made of brick and stucco. The Siva temple at Vilakkanampundi, is called Vijayālaya Cholisvaram in inscription. It was built in the 9th century A.D. The walls of the sanctum are built of bricks and the image of Umāmahesvara is also stucco. It is not known how many times this image has been retouched and we cannot come to any conclusion on the basis of their form, but we only know that the tradition of representing Umāmahesvara at the back wall continued. Thiruverkadu Siva temple is a 12th century stone structure probably built in the reign of Kulottunga III. It carries an image of Umāmahesvara in stone at the back wall of the sanctum. The Ekambaresvara temple at Kanchipuram was in existence even in 7th century but has been renovated many times. About fifty years ago the entire *garbhagrha* was completely renewed of stone. A Somaskanda image in stone is found on the back wall of the sanctum, which is a 20th century image. Probably the original sanctum had this feature.

All this indicate that images of Umāmahesvara or Somaskanda were portrayed in some temples, at the back wall of the sanctum from 8th century A.D.

Bronzes

The earliest Somaskanda image in bronze to have survived is the one from Thiruvālangadu now preserved in the Madras Museum (Pl. 83). In this group Siva and Umā are well portrayed seated on a pedestal. The Skanda accompanying the universal parents was not found but that was originally there is seen from a separate seat provided in the pedestal. Siva appears with four arms holding *parasu* and *mṛga* in the upper arms and *kapāla* and *trisula* in the lower ones. The Devi seated to the left, is two armed holding a *padma* in her right arm and *āhuyavarada mudra* in the left arm. She is young, lithe and beautiful. Among the bronze images of the South so far brought to notice, this is perhaps the earliest representation of Somaskanda, to be assigned to the beginning of the 9th century A.D. Among the metal images of Devi, this is not only the earliest but also one of the finest representations to have survived. The image clearly bears Pallava imprint.

We have seen that in the 8th century Pallava temples, Somaskanda panels are represented at the back wall of the sanctum. Evidently Siva and Pārvati with their child were invoked and worshipped in the sanctum and have assumed ritual importance. We have also seen that in the installation of Sivalinga, the Sakti is consecrated in the *piṭha*. What is significant is that Somaskanda assumed the representative form for Linga and this had an important effect in the later periods. While Linga represented Siva in the sanctum, the metal of Somaskanda represented the main God in festivals. During most of the festivals the Somaskanda images are taken out in procession and as such are to be seen invariably in all the Siva temples. It is difficult to say when this trend took a concrete form. We know that even by the beginning of 7th century the Devaram hymns refers to deities being taken out in procession. Appar, a contemporary of Mahendravarman, refers to the Lord *Vīthi Viṭanka*, taken out in procession. The Somaskanda image of Thiruvārur temple, is called Vīthi Viṭankar. There is a tradition that Muchukunda Chola, one of the early members of the chola dynasty, obtained the image of Somaskanda from Indra. All this tradition indicates, that the worship of Somaskanda is of sufficient antiquity. Whether the processional image referred to by Appar was a Somaskanda bronze, we cannot say.

But in the 8th century A.D., we find the Somaskanda panels at the back wall of the sanctum. But no Somaskanda Bronze of 7th or 8th century has survived. The earliest to have survived is the present image from Thiruvalangadu, under discussion. But even this is a small one hardly about one foot in height. It must also be mentioned that all the bronze images so far noticed, assignable to the Pallava period are small in size. We are not sure, whether this was a processional image.

From the end of the 9th century A.D., however we begin to get big metal images of Somaskanda. The one coming from Kilaiyur, now preserved in the Tanjore Art Gallery, is an early group.

Tripurasundari

One of the most important aspects of Sakti, often referred to is Tripurasundari, Tripura Bhairavi or Tripurā. We have seen that she is referred to in Thirumandiram. Tripurasundari is shown as the consort of Tripurāntaka Siva, in art. In mediaeval Siva temples, where separate shrines are provided for Pārvati, she is called Tripurasundari in some places, but she shares the common iconographic features with other Pārvati images with no special distinguishing attributes. When she is adored in *yantras*, she is also designated as Tripurā or Mahā-Tripurasundari.

Some important Tripurāntaka images have come down to us from the 8th century A.D. The most important ones come from the Kailasanatha temple of Kanchi. In the North-Western shrine, (*anga ālaya*) attached to the main sanctum, Siva is shown riding his charriot. The panel, a massive one, occupies the entire back wall of the shrine. It is in the side wall of the shrine Pārvati is shown. In this illustration she would be Tripurasundari.

Again in the northern wall of the main sanctum Siva is shown ridding his charriot, as Tripurāntaka. In his left is shown Devi ridding on her lion, also in war costumes. Here she is again Tripurasundari or Tripurā. In one of the small cells in the enclosure of the same temple is shown Tripurāntaka where again she is also represented. In one of the small temples built by the queens of Rājasimha, in front of the Kailasanatha temple, the Tripurāntaka aspect of Siva is portrayed at the back, where the Devi is shown by the side. In the sea-shore temple at Mamallapuram, Siva as Tripurāntaka is shown in the northern wall. In the minor Pallava temples at Kanchi, the Tripurāntaka aspect of Siva does not find a prominent place.

The Virattana temple at Thiruvadigai, is a Pallava foundation. It is dedicated to Siva as Tripurāntaka. The temple was renovated in the reign of Pallava Nripatunga and the base of the main shrine was strengthened with stone mouldings in the 14th century by the Kerala ruler Ravivarman Kulasekhara. Above the adhishtana, the entire superstructure is of brick and mortar. It has *angālayas* like the Kailasanatha temple of Kanchi. The Amman shrine in the temple is a late construction. In one of the main walls of the sanctum on the southern side is a figure of Tripurāntaka in stucco but Devi does not receive any prominence there.

In the far south, near Trivandram is an excavated cave at Vilinjam assignable to 8th century A.D. On the side of the excavated cell, are figure-sculptures, one of which represent Tripurāntaka Siva, but no Devi is represented there.

In the early chola temples Siva is seen as Tripurāntaka in one of the Devakoshṭas, sometimes accompanied by the Devi but in most cases appearing without the Devi. A remarkable pair of Tripurāntaka and Tripurasundari, which were originally in the Siva temple, Kodumbalur, is now preserved in the Madras Museum. Siva wearing the war costumes of *Channavīra* and the bow and arrow is clearly Tripurāntaka, but he is shown here not as a destroyer, but as a benign Lord, bestowing boon. The accompanying Tripurasundari image is one of the finest stone sculpture of the Goddess made by the early chola artists. The Goddess is in her prime of youth, and with her in-turned eyes, seems to be in a blissful mood. She carries a lilly in her right arm and has placed her left on the thigh.

The great temple of Tanjore is an important landmark in many aspects. Built about 1000 A.D., by Rājarāja I, the greatest of chola emperors, the temple has many remarkable sculptures and paintings. Being a great conqueror Rājarāja was deeply facinated by the Tripurāntaka aspect of Siva. The representation is repeated in all the niches of the upper row of the main Vimāna, a unique feature not noticed in any other temple. But in none of them, Devi is shown accompanying the lord. The Tripurāntaka theme is repeated in the fine painting in the inner wall of the *sāndhāra* passage of the main shrine. The painting is unquestionably the best representation of Tripurāntaka in Indian art. Even as a destroyer, Siva appears here in his finest form, full of fury, his eyes emitting fire and the arms ready to strike the final blow, the stance itself powerful enough to pulverise the three cities of the Asuras. In this powerful delineation of the theme, the Devi is also seen in animated action seated on her lion attacking the asuras. She is also followed by Kāli. We will return to the painting later.

Some of the finest representation, of Tripurāntaka and Tripurasundari images were also made in bronze in the chola period. Though a good number of them have survived we will discuss only three representations to show the popularity of the theme. The earliest and perhaps the best representation in bronze is now preserved in the Siva temple at Konerirajapuram. Made and gifted by the holy chola queen, Sembiyan Mahadevi, the image called Tripuravijaya in inscription, shows Siva standing with four arms, accompanied by Pārvati as Tripurasundari (Pl. 86). This Tripurasundari bronze is the loveliest production of the chola bronze maker. Another good representation of Tripurāntaka in Bronze comes from Tanjore temple. It is now preserved in the Tanjore Art Gallery.[2] The God is probably identical with Tanjai Alagar of the inscription. But its consort has not survived. The Kongu artists have given us a unique specimen of Tripurāntaka and Tripurasundari[3] (Pl. 87) in the local idiom. The images are now under worship in Kodumudi in Coimbatore District. Poised in majestic stance, the image of Siva signifies the ease with which the three cities of the devils were destroyed. The accompanying Devi is like a tender creeper, standing with her left arm rested on a attendant female, standing nearby. There are many other examples of this in bronze but this need not detain us here.

There is one aspect of Tripurāntaka we must mention. In most of the temples the annual festival closes with the car festival in which the bronze image of the temple will be decorated and placed and drawn in procession around the village. The car festival signifies, Siva riding his charriot as Tripurāntaka and the Devi accompanying him would be the Tripurasundari.

In all the above instances the Devi manifesting herself as Tripurasundari, appears as the consort of Siva and not independently.

KANYA KUMARI TEMPLE

An important temple for the understanding of South Indian Sakti cult is the temple of Kanyakumari, at the southern most tip of India. This is a temple solely dedicated to the goddess as Kanya and is adored as such from very ancient times. The reference in later Vedic literature to *kātyāyanyāya Vidmahe*, *Kanya Kumāri dhīmahi*, *Tanno durgi pracodayāt*, is taken to refer to this goddess of Tamil land by some scholars. The 'Periplus of the Eretheraen sea' assigned to the first century after Christ makes a positive reference to the worship of this deity. "Beyond this there is another place called Comari at which are the cape of the comari and a harbour. Hither come those men who wish to consecrate themselves for the rest of their lives and bathe and dwell in celebacy and women also do the same, for it is told that a goddess once dwelt here and bathed."

The present image of the goddess is two armed (Pl. 82), holding an *akshamala* in the right arm and *kati hasta* in the left. It is a rare representation. The presentation of the Devi with only two arms, is probably to signify her Virgin aspect. That she was the embodiment of knowledge, as Uma Haimavati is an Upanishadic concept. The *akshamala* in the right arm of the Devi is indicative of her *Jnāna* aspect. What is interesting is that even before the Christian era, the Vedic concepts of Kanya, and Uma Haimavati have become a part of the Tamil Country. This is significant in two ways. That Vedic ideas have been given permanance in this deity. Secondly even in such early period, Vedic cult, which was mainly concerned with Yagas, have accepted the murti worship (*i.e.* the image worship) and thirdly local legends have already grown around this shrine in the first century A.D.

Kanyakumari was revered and respected by the Pandya rulers. They often delighted themselves in calling themselves as the lords Kumari shore, *Kumaritturaivan*. The imperial cholas were great devotees of goddess Kanyakumari. A number of Chola rulers have gifted wealth personally for worship in the temple. More than fifty inscriptions have been copied from this temple, some of them being fragmentary. Among them most of them relate to the rule period of the Imperial Cholas. Rajaraja, Rajendra, Rajadhi raja, Sundara chola Pandya, Kulothunga, Vikrama chola and others are thus represented in this temple.

In the inscription the Devi is called Kanya Bhātari, or Kanya Bhagavati. The wife of Sundara chola Pandya, Mukkokilanadigal seems to have been a great devotee of the goddess. Her attendant is seen gifting a perpetual lamp to the goddess. Rajendra II, personally gifted the proceeds from a number of villages, for worship in the temple on the birth day of one of his queens Kilanadigal. The inscription of his successor Virarajendra Chola, is a historic record giving the geneology of the Chola till the granter. Virarajendra himself gifted a number of villages to the Worship in the temple. The great period in the history of the temple, was in the reigns of the imperial cholas. In the succeeding period, it has received benefactions in the hands of later Pandẏas and the rulers of Travancore. The present structure of the shrine seems to date from the time of the Cholas. Additions were made in later times. Certain important concepts connected with the temple are that the goddess is Kanya and as such there is no shrine for Siva here. That she did penance to marry Siva is also associated with this temple.

THE MEENAKSHI TEMPLE, MADURAI

One of the most important temples that deserves special attention with reference to the study of Devi cult in Tamilnad is the Meenakshi temple at Madurai. A brief study of the history of the temple may not be out of place here.

Early history

The temple is now popularly called Meenākshi temple, but in temple records is mentioned as Meenākshi Sundaresvara temple, Madurai. The main deity of this temple from ancient times is Siva. The main deity of Madurai is referred to in Sangam works assignable to the beginning of the Christian era as the Lord with parasu. The evening festival of this Lord and the great procession are referred to in the work *Madurai Kānchi*. It is therefore evident the antiquity of the Siva temple of Madurai could be traced as far back as the beginning of the Christian era. In the beginning of the 7th century it has become an important centre of pilgrimage as we find the Saivite saints, Jnānasambandar and Appar visiting this shrine and paying obeisance to the Lord. In the hymns, the main deity that receives adoration is Siva though in some instances Siva is said to be in the company of Devi with beautiful eyes resembling fish, *Ankayar Kanni* (Mīnakshi). Such references to Siva being in the company of Uma, are innumerable and are only in the general nature. It does not refer to the existence of a separate shrine for the Goddess in the Siva temple. The main deity continues to be Siva. The *sthalapurānas* i.e. the local legends, which arose about this temple till 13th century centre round Siva's sports. The *sthalapurāna* (*Thiruvilayādalpurānam*), written around 13th century speaks of the sports of Siva, where Devi occurs as a secondary deity.

In the 13th century, the chola ruler, Kulothunga III arranged for special festival to Lord Siva, when he conquered Madurai. Though by this time separate shrines have come into existence for Devi in Siva temples, we are not sure whether the Madurai temple had a separate shrine for the Devi in 13th century. The temple suffered damage and desecration early in the 14th century, during Malikkaffur's incursion and the Muslim rule. When the Nayak rule was established in Madurai, in the 16th century the temple received great benefactions.

The beginning of a great movement

Visvanātha Nāyak, the originator of the Nāyak dynasty of Madurai, is said to have built the main Vimanas of both the Siva and Amman shrines. This may be placed about 1550 A.D. The architectural details of the shrines conform this date. So the present shrine of Mīnakshi is a middle 16th century structure. It is significant to note that the *Vimāna* of the Siva temple is built on an elaborate plan, showing eight elephants supporting the superstructure. This Vimāna has been built in its original position, retaining some earlier structures in their old condition.

The one hundred years

The one hundred years from 1550, is the peak period in the structural activity of the Madurai temple. The majority of the structures like the 1000 pillared hall, the 2nd eastern tower, Vīravasantarāya maṇḍapa, the Kambattadi maṇḍapa (the maṇḍapa around the flag staff) the inner northern tower, and most of the gopuras, have come into existence towards the end of 16th century, during the reign of Vīrappa Nāyak. This ruler himself built the 1000 pillared maṇḍapa, the 2nd prākāra, the northern gopura, etc. It is seen that all these building activities are oriented towards Lord Siva who was still the central deity.

However the same ruler is said to have covered the flag staff of the Amman shrine with gold. This flag staff, gifted by one Mallappan, had become old due to usage and was renewed. This was again guilded with gold by Thirumalai Nāyak in the 17th century. The point of interest is that by the middle of the 16th century, the Devi shrine is beginning to assume importance, with a separate shrine and flag staff.

Thirumalai Nāyak

The advent of Thirumalai Nāyak in the 17th century (1623-1659) was a turning point in the history of the Madurai temple. He built that remarkable *pudumandapa* and began constructing the tallest tower possible, the latter however came up only upto the ceiling level of the ground floor. Thirumal Nāyak, constructed the enclosure around the Amman shrine, and the front maṇḍapa now called *Kili maṇḍapa* in front of the Amman shrine. His queens erected the *Ashta sakti maṇḍapa*, in front of the Devi shrine. A life size statue of Thirumal Nāyak is to be seen inside the enclosure of the Amman shrine. It is evident that the Devi has assumed greater significance in the reign of this ruler. But what may be considered a more significant emergence of the Devi cult, is the special festival arranged by Thirumal Nāyak, who considered himself a servant of the Goddess Mīnakshi, and proclaimed that he ruled the country on behalf of the Goddess as her agent. There is a significant work called *tala pustaka*, which gives an almost an eye witness account, of how Thirumal Nāyak celebrated the symbolic assumption of the kingdom every year during the annual festival. The following is a free rendering of the passage relating to this festival.

Senkolvila

The mode of receiving the sceptre by the Durai (ruler) is as follows. Till the Saka year 1544, corresponding to the year Dundubi, the ruler used to receive the sceptre from the main deity in the *mūlasthāna*, where it used to be religiously placed. But from the days of Thirumalai Sauri Ayyan, when the sthala assumed great fame and as a result of festivals instituted, the sthānikas, the Bhattas of both the sections, will meet the king on the morning of the 8th day festival, in the month of Chitra and invite to his kind notice. The king will complete his bath etc and will observe fast for the day. In the temple, special decorations would be done, for the Lord when the lamps would be lit. The six pillared mandapa in the Amman shrine would be decorated. The deity would be placed on a *ratnasimhāsana* (jewelled throne) in that mandapa. To the accompaniment of many torches, music, dance and *melavādya,* the assembly will meet° there. Anantaguna Sadāsiva Bhaṭṭa, will perform *thirumanjana* (anointment) with the golden pot intended for *Paṭṭābhisheka* and perform *mantra* rites. Then the seven sthānikas will open the jewel-box, in the treasury and will take out the Pattābhisheka crown, and sceptre; for Getti Mudali, Tatpurushadeva Mudali, and Periyadeva Mudali, Makara Mudra for one, Makara flag for another will be taken out; golden stylus for Viluppādarāyan; Rshohā Mudra for Pāndi Nāṭṭu Mudali, and Nagarā Mudra for Kesava Dikshita would be taken out and carried in an *ābharana* plate. The sthānikas will carry them in procession to the accompaniment of music and reach the presense of Amman, where they would be placed in front of Her. The Nambi will perform pūja which will be followed by Pattābhisheka. The Bhaṭṭas of both sections will crown the Goddess and give the ceremonials sceptre in the hands of the deity. After this Neivadya would be offered. Then message would be sent to the ruler through the Kaṭṭiyakkārar that it is time (for his arrival).

The king will then mount the royal elephant decorated with *howda, ambāri* etc. He will be accompanied by the chieftains of the seventy two Pālayappaṭṭu. Each will be accompanied by his own men, carrying arms and their respective paraparnalia. The procession will be preceded by 18 types of *melavādyas,* many types of torches and day torches, crackers, and also dance and sports of the girls of Nāṭakasāla. The grandeur of the King's procession to the temple to receive the sceptre, is beyond description.

On reaching the temple the king will descend from the elephant and with all festivities reach the six pillared mandapa of the Amman shrine. There the *shodasōpacāra dipāradhana* would be performed to the Goddess. After the king has completed his worship, the Bhaṭṭas of both the sections will offer to the king *prasādas* like *Vibhūti.* The *nilai* garland and the twin garland, which were offered to the deity would be removed and offered to the ruler. The *Sadarap parivaṭṭam* and the double *parivaṭṭam* would be tied to the king. (Parivattam is a silken or other cloth received from the deity and tied around the head of the distinguished, as a mark of honour). The sceptre would be received from the deity and presented to the king. Then the seven *sthānikas* would be given *vibhūti, sandal* and other *prasādas* in the *sannidhi.* The Bhaṭṭas of both sections, will present the respective emblems to the sthānikas, The sthānikas will receive their respective emblems, and with the king proceed to the entrance; the king will mount the royal elephant and perform the festival called *Pattanapravesa.* Of the seven sthānikas, two Bhaṭṭas will ascend the palanquins, and the remaining five will mount horses and follow the king in the procession. The Goddess and the Ilaya Nayinār (Subrahmanya) who was in the six pillared mandapa will be brought to the street in procession. They will be placed in cetti (?) where *abhisheka, neivedya* and *diparadhana* would be performed. The *Pallakku chokkar* (Probably Lord Siva on Palanquin) will also be brought and then the temple will be locked. With all celebrations the *Pattana pravesa* would be performed and the procession will reach the *Asthana mandapa* in the royal palace. The *Asthana mandapa* would be tastefully decorated and the throne would be in the centre.

The king will enthrone the sceptre and will remain seated by its side. The sthānikas would be ordered to remain by the side. The sceptre will be offered *neivedya* and *diparadhana*. The local governors, Palaiyakkara Chieftains, Dalavay Pradhani and all others will pay their tributes to the king and the king will be pleased to receive them. Earlier Sadasiva Bhatta and Malava Chakravarti will be presented *Sadira* and *Kadaya*. The other sthānikas will be presented with *Salvai* and either ear ornament or a necklace. The other *parijanas* will receive presents according to their status. The *sthalattars* will then order the *parijanas* to return to the temple and perform their service to the God. Then the Lords in the palace, Palaiyakkarars and Kulankilars will be suitably honoured and ordered to retire to their quarters. The king will retire to the *antapura*. The sceptre will remain on the throne in *Asthana mandapa*. The next day *punarpuja* will be performed to the sceptre and will be returned to the temple. Thus the *Pattabhisheka* festival will be performed to the Goddess.

The above account of the *talapustaka* brings out some salient points that deserve special attention. It says that before the saka era 1544 (1622) that is before the accession of Thirumalai Nāyak, the sceptre used to be offered to the Mulasthana before being received and handed over to the king. It means that the concept then the king was ruling the country as a servant of the God was popular before Thirumalai Nāyak and the Nāyak rulers earlier to him have also performed this as a rite but it is not clear whether they considered the Lord Siva or the Goddess as the real ruler. But Thirumalai Nāyak considered Mīnakshi as the real ruler of the country and it was she who was crowned and given the sceptre.

Tradition continued

This tradition of symbolically receiving the royal sceptre from Goddess Mīnakshi, was continued by the successors of Thirumalai Nāyak. This writer has discovered a painting in the Madurai temple, depicting Queen Mangamma, a successor of Thirumalai Nāyak, standing before the Goddess and receiving the sceptre. This tradition is retained to this day in the chitra festival of the temple.

Impact of literature

The increasing importance given to the Goddess Mīnakshi is not only due to fabulous gifts and festivals instituted by the King Thirumalai Nāyak, but also due to the remarkable literary output during the same period. It is of interest to mention that the literary compositions, that date earlier to 17th century A.D., have Sundaresvara as the Lord of the poem but from the 17th century, the poems are in praise of Goddess Mīnakshi. Two important poets deserve special attention and both of them have received patronage in the hands of that great Nayak ruler, Thirumalai. The two are Kumaragurupara, and Nilakanta Dikshita; the later is said to have been a minister to Thirumalai Nāyak.

Kumaraguru

Kumaragurupara was born of Saiva Vellala family near Srivaikuntam in Trinelveli District. He is said to have been born dumb and till his fifth year could not speak a word. As a result of ardent prayers to Lord Subrahmanya of Thiruchendur, he gained his speech and began composing excellent poems in Tamil. When he visited Madurai, Kumaraguru composed, Mīnakshi Amman Pillaittamil, at the request of Thirumalai Nāyak. Pillaittamil is a type of composition in Tamil in which the hero or the heroine of the poem is conceived of as a child and all the exploits are attributed to the child. Ten stages of childhood are praised, generally, in this type of composition. Mīnakshi-Amman Pillaittamil, is one of the finest Pillaittamil in Tamil literature in which Goddess Mīnakshi is praised as a girl child sporting in the universe, bestowing grace on the devotees. It is said that Kumaragurupara, composed the poem, being seated in six pillared mandapa of the Mīnakshi shrine, in the presense of Thirumalai Nāyak. As he was singing the *Muthupparuvam* (the stage of Pearl) Goddess Mīnakshi assumed the form of a young girl, came running to him from the sanctum, sat on his lap, presented him with her pearl-necklace and disappeared. This episode is still popularly cherished by millions of devotees.

The story must be traced directly to the Sakta cult, wherein it is believed that Sakti will manifest herself in whatever form she is adored by the devotee. Obviously she appeared before Kumaraguru as a girl-child as she was praised as Balā Tripurasundari by him in this Pillaittamil work. This work is a full Sakta work and reflects the Sakta traditions. The Goddess is praised as Abhiramavalli, Kalyana Saundari, and Abhishekavalli weilding sugarcane bow (Rajarajesvari) (75). She is also said to have given birth to the universe, the mother of Akhilanda (28). That she is adored by Tantrik followers is also alluded to wherein they are trying to reach her grace in the *mahakasa* at the *dvadasanta* (76). As it is a 17th century work it reflects all Sakta tradition and it is needless to go into all the details. It is just of interest to mention that Kumaraguru visited Kasi and established a mutt there. Besides Mīnakshi Amman Pillaittamil, Kumaraguru has sung Sakala Kalavallimalai on Goddess Sarasvati and hymns in praise of God Subrahmanya and other deities. Three other poems ascribed to him traditionally also deserve special mention. They are Mīnakshi Amman Kuram, Mīnakshi Amman Irattaimanimalai, and Sivakami Ammai Irattaimanimalai. The learned Tamil scholar U.V. Swaminatha Iyer however considers these three were not the works of Kumaragurupara. The first two are in praise of Goddess Mīnakshi of Maduari, and the last one on Goddess Sivakami of Chidambaram. However the colophon to Mīnakshi Amman Maram, praises Thirumalaibhupati, the ruler of Maduari. The tradition seems to have preserved the historicity and these three poems were also by Kumaragurupara. It is necessary to mention that Kumaraguru was not a Sakta. He has suing the praises of Subrahmanya and Siva besides the Devi. It only reflects the religious tolerance of the people of the age.

Nilakanta Dikshita

Almost the same must be said of Nilakanta Dikshita who was the other great composer of the period. While Kumaraguru excelled in Tamil composition, he was a follower of Srikanta Sambhu's Sivadvaita. He belonged to the famous Sanskrit composer Appayya Dikshita's sisters family. Nilakanta excelled in the *alankara* known as *Vakrokti*, Nilakantasya *Vakrokti*. Nilakanta's one of the finest poems is the *Anandasagarasthava* on Goddess Mīnaskhi, Nilakanta refers to the Goddess as Mīnaskhi and Malayadhvaja Pāndya Kanyā. Obviously the term Mīnakshi is a sanskritisation of the Tamil word *Ankayarkkanni*. It is with the advent of Nilakanta Dikshita in 17th century A.D. the term Mīnakshi gained greater currency for the Goddess of Madurai. Among his numerous other works, Nilakanta has a hymn on Candi, called *Caṇḍīrahasya*, consisting of 36 verses.

Popularity of Goddess Mīnakshi

The general and gradual popularity being gained by the Devi cult, the great contribution of Thirumalai Nayak and the literary pourings of these two great poets, one in Tamil and the other in Sanskrit, and the continuance of the Hindu Nayak Kingdom in Madurai till the middle of 18th century, has made the cult of Meenakshi so popular in the Southern part of Tamilnad.

In the great temple of Madurai, Sakti images are found in considerable number and deserve mention. One significant aspect is the absense of Durga images prominently. The Kāli images predominate, especially in relation to the dancing form of Siva, often in *ūrdhva tāndava* pose. As mentioned earlier, both the Vimanas of Lord Sundaresvara and Goddess Mīnakshi were built by Visvanatha Nayak in the middle of the 16th century. In the Vimana of the Goddess the main devakoshtas carry Icca Sakti, Kriya Sakti and Jnana Sakti, all the three being shown standing, two armed, holding a flower in the right arm and keeping the left in hanging position. It is also interesting to mention that the main image of Mīnakshi is also in standing form with two arms. There is a group of Saptamatas in this temple, which are the earliest sculptures to have survived. They are to be assigned to 8th century A.D. and are the finest representations of Pandya art. The group is not complete. The scultptures are said to have been elsewhere and brought to the temple with in the living memory.

In front of the Kambattadi mandapa, in the Sundaresvara temple, Madurai, are four remarkable sculptures that deserve special mention. They are over seven feet in height with multiple arms and are known for their powerful delineation. Two of them are now called Virabhadra images, one Agni Virabhadra and the other Aghora Virabhadra. Of the other two, one represents Siva dancing the ūrdhava tāndava and the other Kāli.

Besides these four remarkable sculptures, there are various representations of Siva, shown around the *dhvaja sthamba*. These are clearly intended to portray all the known iconographic forms of Siva under one roof. The sculptures though interesting from the iconographic point of view, lack artistic expressions and are generally dull except perhaps the Kalyanasundara group. Flanking the entracce to the Sundaresvara shrine, are two interesting iconographic representations. On to the right of the entrance, is Sadasivamurti with his consort and the one of the left represents a Goddess now adored as Gayatri devi.

The iconographic representations of Siva around the dwajasthamba were installed by Sri Nagappayya of Vainagāram family of the Nattukkottai Nagarattas Community about 100 years ago (1877). I think the tradition is right and the sculptures may be assigned to 18th century. But the four remarkable sculptures representing ūrdhva tāndava, Kāli and Virabhadras, are of 16th century. In one of the pillars there is an inscription recording the construction of the mandapa by Virappa nayaka, the son Visvanatha Krishnappa nayaka in the saka era 1505 (1583 A.D.). It is evident that the four remarkable sculptures belong to this mandapa and are fine examples of 16th century handiwork.

Agni Virabhadra

This fine image of the God is shown with a *Jvālāmakuta* and in the centre is shown a prominent skull. The protruding teeth and prominent moustache, highten the terrific nature of the scene. The *kundalas* in the ears are formed with coiling snakes. Behind the *jatāmakuṭa* a snake move around. The Lord is eight armed piercing with the *sūla*, the dying Asura the right arms hold, *sūla, damaruka*, sword, and a human figure probably *kamkāla.* The left arms carry *kapāla,* shield and bell and the fourth left arm holds the handle of the *sūla.* Around the lower right arm is a serpent. Snakes are also seen as anklets. A garland of bell worn around the neck extends upto the knee. High heeld sandals are worn in the feet. The left feet is pressing the dying asura, whose neck is pierced by the *Sūla.* Below this sculpture are shown, eight Bhairavas on this four faces of the pillar.

It is possible that this sculpture identified as Agni Virabhadra, on account of the *jvāla*-like head-dress probably represents Bhairava.

Aghora Vīrabhadra

This sculpture standing close to the Agni Virabhadra, wears *Jaṭāmakuta* and is endowed with 10 arms; the upper right arm draws the arrow. Other right arms hold *parasu, sūla, damaruka* and a long bladed sword, piercing the neck of the dying figure below the feet. The left arms hold bow, deer, a small ring in the pointed finger, *ankusa* and shield. The shield is highly ornate and bears a figure of Vīrabhadra, high sandals are worn on the feet. A two armed figure wearing a crown and carrying sword and shield is falling dead, pierced by the sword.

Below this sculpture is shown, a four armed Kāli, kicking a falling figure with her right leg and holding *sūla* and sword in the right arms and *kapāla* and shield in the left arms. It is a fine representation. To the right are shown one woman beating a gong and the other a portrait of a Naik king in adoration, probably representing Vīrappa Nāyak, the maker of the image.

Ūrdhva Tāndava

The Ūrdhva Tāndava Siva of this group is an imposing sculpture, with ten arms. The following emblems are seen in the right arms *damaruka, parasu*, arrow, sword, and *sūla.* The left arm holds fire, deer, bow, shield and bell. The lifted right leg reaches the face band. The left leg is planted on the back of the dwarf, *musalaka,* who holds a sword and shield. To the left of Siva is shown Nandi seated, with bovine head and four arms. The upper right arms are held above the head in anjali and the lower ones are playing on *kudamuza*. To the right of Siva is shown the skeletal figure of Karaikkal pey the woman saint playing cymbals.

Immediately below is shown Narada. On the left face of the pillar is Vishnu, four armed, playing on a drum called Idakkai. To his left is shown a bearded sage. On the right face of the pillar is shown the four headed Brahma, playing cymbals.

The representation of this ūrdhva tāndava, corresponds to the description, given in Tamil poems like the Kallādam.

Bhadra Kāli

This Kāli is greatly venerated by the local people. She has urdhvakesa, and is 8 armed, holding *prayogasūla*, in right arm. The emblem in the second right arm is broken. The third arm holds a weapon made of flowers. The Devi has placed her left leg on the lifted palm of a *gana*. On the left face of the pillar, is a human figure, playing a *maddala*. On the right face of the pillar is Kuli, holding sword and shield.

Pudumandapa-Dancing Siva

The representation of Ūrdhva Tāndava Siva and Kāli, have assumed great significance during the Nayak period. A some what similar representation, is now to be seen in the Pudumandapa, erected in 17th century by Thirumalai Nāyak. At the western end of the mandapa are the sculptures of Ūrdhva Tāndava Siva, and Kāli. Siva with his leg lifted above the facial band, is shown with ten arms; holds *damaruka*, *parasu*, sword, *sūla* and *abhaya mudra* in the right arms; fire, deer, shield, *vrshadvaja* and *gajahasta* in the left arms. The *vrsha*, held on a long shaft is reminescent of the dancing Siva found in the Thirupparankunram, assignable to 8th century A.D. Below the planted leg is the dwarf holding a snake. To the right of the feet of Siva is Karaikkal ammai, and to the left is a four-armed figure playing *kudamuza*. Unlike the figure described in the previous *Ūrdhva Tāndava* form, where Nandi with a bovine head is shown playing *kudamuzā*, here the figure is shown with human face. Nandisa is shown playing *maddala* below. He is four armed, holding deer and axe in the upper arms and playing *maddala* with the lower arms. On either side are shown *ganas* playing conch.

On the right face of the pillar is shown Vishnu, four armed, wielding *cakra*, *sankha*, the drum Idakkai and beating stick. Below Vishnu are shown Tumburu and Narada, carrying *Vinas*. Behind them is shown the ruler Thirumalai Nāyak standing in adoration with his consort.

On the left face of the rock is the four armed Brahma, with *akshamāla* and *kamandalu* in the upper arms, and playing cymbals with the lower arms. Below Brahma are shown sages in *anjali* pose. Behind Brahma are shown two portraits of women among whom the first has manly head-dress and lower garment.

Kāli

Facing Siva on the other side is shown Kāli, with *ūrdhvakesa,* she has eight arms. In the right arms are *prayogasūla,* arrow, *cakra* and sword. While in the left are bow, pasa, shield and *kapāla,* A female attendant supports the left leg of the devi. Further below are shown another female attendant holding *sūla* and *agni.* On the left face of the pillar, is shown a female playing *maddala* and on the right face is a big Kuli carrying sword and shield. A female figure is shown offering incense.

In both the Kāli figures now discussed, the Devi is shown in dancing pose, wielding her usual weapons, and not as a vanguished by the great dancer. In scenes where Devi is shown as a vanguished Goddess, she is shown clasping her lower arms. We may hold that she is not only a witness but also a partaker in the cosmic dance. We have seen that Kāli is shown dancing with Siva even in the Ananda Tandava form as seen in the Gangaikonda Cholapuram sculpture. We have also noticed in the panel of Catura Tāndava Siva at Thirupparankunram assignable to 8th century A.D. Kāli is shown dancing with Siva.

Mention has been mentioned earlier that competition between Siva and Kāli and the final victory of Siva one referred to in *Kallādam.* The work is assignable to 11th century A.D. Though this is referred to, in this medieaval text, we may conclude that this is not the original concept, and was a later development. The ruler shown adoring Siva's dance, however, points to the superiority of Siva's dance which received veneration.

Bhairavi

The mandapa before the astha sakti mandapa carries sculptures, one representing Bhairavi and the other a Kirāta. The Bhairavi is on the southern side. She is two armed holding *sūla* in the right arm and *kapāla* in the left arm. The hair is tied as a knot to the side. *Vibhūti* is seen on the forehead. A point of interest is the presense of five hooded Cobra over the head of the Goddess. This is an important iconographic feature. In later temples, which are now worshipped as Māri Amman, Mundakanni Amman, Ankālamman or Pachaiyamman, we find in variably the presence of the five hooded cobra. What is the meaning of this association? While discussing Takkayagapparani we have mentioned that Kāli is endowed with many aspects of Vishnu and one such association is Vishnu's serpent Ananta, acting as the seat of the Devi. A Chola sculpture now preserved in the Siva temple at Thirukkattuppalli, shows the Devi seated under a single hooded cobra. The sculpture is assignable to 10th century A.D. We have also shown the association serpents legend with Devi, mentioned in Periyapurānam, a 12th century work.

Thus the association of serpent hood over the head of Devi could be traced back to 10th century A.D. It is significant to see that the theme has continued to be popular in 17th century A.D.

Facing this Bhairavi is a sculpture of a hunter of the other pillar. What is the significance of this Kirāta sculpture is not clear for the present. The Kirāta is two armed holding a parrot in the left arm, and Vismaya in the right arm. By the side of the feet is shown a monkey.

These sculptures and the mandapa are to be assigned to the 17th century A.D. and were either constructed by Thirumalai Nāyak himself or by an immediate predecessor of his.

Vasantarāya mandapa

We may also mention the Vasantaraya mandapa in front of the Siva shrine and adjoining the thousand pillared hall. The pillared hall has to be assigned to late 16th century and must have come into existence sometime after the thousand pillared hall. In this Vasantaraya mandapa, at the eastern end are four figure sculptures, each being about five feet in height. On the southern side of the passage, are Virabhadra and Kāli; Kāli wears *kiritamakuta* which has flames issuing from its sides. Above the head is shown the five hooded serpent. The Devi is eight armed holding sword, discus, trident and *tādanamudra*; the left arms hold shield *sankha*, *pāsa* and *kapāla*. The third eye is present in the forehead. The rounded eyeballs and protruding teeth highten the destructive aspect of the Goddess. But this is one of the finest sculpture in the Madurai temple.

To the north of it are sculptures representing a hunter and Bhairava. The Bhairava may be considered the counterpart of the Goddess. He wears jatamakuta, and has six arms, *sūla*, *parasu* and sword while the left has deer, shield and *kapala*. This figure may be called Mahākala and the corresponding figure as Mahākāli.

Ashtasakti maṇḍapa

At the eastern end of the temple complex, in front of the Meenakshi shrine, is the entrance *mandapa*, which is now called *Ashtasakti mandapa*, on account of the presence of eight Sakti sculptures. It is seen that this mandapa was built by one of the queens of Thirumalai Nāyak in 17th century. The Portraits of Thirumalai Nāyak and his queens and other nobles are to be seen in the pillars at the back. The intention of the builder is clearly to make this the entrance to the Meenakshi shrine. At a later period, in the early 18th century, another mandapa was erected further east leaving a roadway in between. This, now called Nagara mandapa, was erected by Queen Mangammal.

It is the Ashta Sakti mandapa that is of interest to us. At the front are shown *dvārapalikas*, one of either side of the entrance and chouri bearers at the rear. At the entrance to the inner mandapa are Ganesa and Subrahmanya. But it is flanking the entrance we notice the Ashta saktis. There are altogether eight images of Goddess, all of them standing and identical, except for variations in emblems and head gear. The series begin from the inner end of the northern side. The following are the deities represented—Manonmani, Mahesvari, Syāmala, Yagnarūpini, Kaumāri, Raudri, Vaishnavi and Mahālakshmi.

Manonmani : Wears *jaṭāmakuṭa*; four armed, the upper arms hold lotuses; the lower right arm is in *Chin mudra* and holds an *akshamāla* between the figures. In the left arm she holds a flower bunch; a parrot is seen pecking flowers.

Mahesvari : Wears *kirita makuta*; four armed, *ankusa, pasa, abhaya* and *varada* being the emblems.

Syāmala : Wears *kirita makuta*; four armed and holds lotus and lilly in the upper arms and *abhaya* and *varada* in the lower arms.

Yagnarūpini: Wears *jaṭāmakuṭa*; holds *sruk* and *sruva* in the upper arms and *abhaya* and *varada* in the lower arms.

Kaumāri : Wears *kirita*; has four arms holding Sakti, Vajra, *abhaya* and *varada* in the arms.

Raudri : Wears *jaṭāmakuṭa*, ball-like eyes and protruding teeth show her *raudra* aspect; holds *damaruka*, serpent, *sūla* and *kapāla*.

Vaishnavi: Wears *kirita*; holds *sankha, cakra, abhaya* and *varada* but what is of interest is the presense of *vibhuti pundra* on the forehead.

Mahālakshmi: Wears *kirita* and holds *abhaya* and *varada* in the lower arms while the upper ones bear lotuses.

The representation of this Ashta Saktis in this temple in 17th century is interesting.

THE KAMAKKOTTAM CULT

A special character of the Siva temples of Tamilnad is the existence of a separate shrine to Goddess within the Siva temple complex. These shrines are now popularly called Amman shrines and have assumed equal importance as the main sanctums 'of Siva. In some temples, the devotees now believe that they should first visit the Amman shrine before going to the Siva shrine. From the end of 11th century A.D., these Amman shrines have assumed significance and were invariably called Kāmakkoṭṭam in all the temples and the Amman was called *Kāmakkoṭṭam Uḍaiya Nācchiyār*. The importance attached to the Amman shrines is neither noticed in Kerala nor in Andhra-Karnātaka regions. It has become specially Tamil in character and therefore needs special study.

One of the most important temples now adored as Kāmakkoṭṭam is the present Kāmākshi temple of Kanchi. The earliest reference to Kāmākshi occurs in the hymns of the Saivite saint Appar. I have discussed elsewhere the date of the Saivite saints and assigned Appar to the beginning of 7th century A.D. One of Appar's hymns addressed to the presiding deity of Thiruvadigai, is taken to allude to Pārvati embracing Siva at Kanchi, when the river Kampa overflowed. K.R. Venkataraman holds that the episode referred to in Appar's hymn relates to Kanchi. But it is stretching the meaning of the word too far. The more appropriate meaning is that Lord Siva bears on his chest the mark left by Devi in her amourous sports. The selection of the word Kāmakkoḍi in relation to amourous sports is significant as it is to heighten the poetic appeal (Kāma standing here for sexual desires). It is also significant in another way. The words *amar porudu kolamkoṇḍa* used are carefully chosen which means Uma was sportively resisting and Siva exercised sufficient force to embrace her. In the story of Kanchi, this amourous force on the part of Siva has no place. Uma embraced Siva out of fear and not in amourous sport. The verse has no allusion to the Kanchi episode either outwordly or even subtly. In the present case the Goddess at Thiruvadigai is referred to as Kāmakoḍi by Appar.

It must be remembered that in the mediaeval chola inscriptions the Goddess in Siva temples are referred to generally as Kāmakōṭi. Hence the suggestion that Kāmakkōṭṭam-Lalita cult originated from Kanchi and spread to other places of Tamilnadu, is unacceptable. Appar the earliest to refer to Kāmakōṭi speaks of her in association with Thiruvadigai. Jnānasambandar, an younger contemporary of Appar also refers to Kāmakōṭi in association with a Irumbulai in Tanjore district.

It only suggests that by the beginning of the 7th century the term Kāmakkoṭi applied to the consort of Siva was well-known. How far earlier this concept developed we do not know.

We have seen that in the Kailasanatha temple of Kanchi, a separate shrine for the Goddess was provided and that it was as important as the other *Parivāra* shrines like Durga, Ganesa, Jyeshṭa etc. However the sub shrines dedicated to Brahma and Vishnu are bigger than the Ambika shrine.

The Devi shrines in Siva temples being called Kāmakkōṭṭam Uḍaiya Nāchiyār is not confined to any particular region. It is found in all the districts of Tamilnadu, from Chingleput in the north to Thirunelveli in the south, where inscriptions are found referring to the Devi shrines as Kāmakkōṭṭamuḍaiya Nāchiyār shrines. Beginning from 11th, to the end of 16th century, we find the name Kāmakkṭṭōamuḍaiya Nācchi occurring for Goddess in various temples. Nor such references restricted to any particular dynasty. References occur in inscriptions of Chola, Pandya, Sambuvaraya and Vijayanagar rulers. But soon the Goddess of each temple was given a separate name and this in most cases, was based, on a significant name found in the Devaram hymns of that particular temple. These were also sanskritised which are now popular among the devotees, the most famous being *Ankayal Kaṇṇi* for Meenākshi of Madurai.

It is of interest to mention that in the worship of images, depending upon the approach of the devotee, different forms are prescribed. In the Vaishnava āgamic texts the deities are classified as *Yōga*, *Bhōga*, *Vira* and *Ābhicharika* forms are prescribed for worship. In Saivite concepts also we know that some of the temples were called *Vīrasthānas*. We have shown, that *Vāma mārgins* were there in Tamilnadu. Sekkilār in his *Periyapurānam* refers to a *Yoga piṭha* and a *Bhōga piṭha* that were in existence in Kanchi. The Devi residing in the *yoga pīṭha* is said to be surrounded by Yoginis and probably this refers to a Durga temple. The reference to Bhōga piṭha is to the temple of Kūmākshi when a separate shrine was established for the Goddess as consort of Siva, then it obviously stood as a *Bhōga pīṭha*, Bhōgasthāna or Bhogasakti. That is the reason why it was probably called Kāmakkōṭṭam.

It may also be mentioned that in most of the Siva temples a bronze image of Devi is placed in the sanctum where the Siva linga is worshipped. Such images are called Bhōgasakti or Bhōgesvari. It is believed that Siva should never be without this Bhōga Sakti. The prayers of the devotee to bestow happy worldly life on him, is addressed to Siva and Devi as universal parents. We have also seen that the Sakṭi of Siva is installed in the *Yōnipītha* during the consecration ceremony. When such is the case why, there arose a separate shrine for Devi with in the Siva temple complex. We may suggest the following for such a development. Just as Durga, or Kāli was consecrated for bestowing victory or *Yoga*, separate temples were erected for Devi for the fulfilment of *Bhōga*.

The references to Kāmakkōṭṭam of Kanchi by Saint Sundaramurti in 8th century was probably to such a separate temple dedicated to Bhōgadevi. Since the Devi was always recognised as the consort of Siva, early literature spoke of her in association with the famous Siva temple of the village, like the Ekāmbaranātha at Kanchi, though both the temples stood in different parts of the city, separated by considerable distance. This continued to be the norm till the end of 11th century. The great temples of Kanchi, Tanjore, Gangaikondacholapuram, Darasuram and even Tribhuvanam temples were built by the chola rulers probably as *Vīrasthānas* dedicated to Siva. That is perhaps the reason why no separate Devi shrine was erected within the temple complex.

However, when new shrines were erected separately for Devi from 12th century A.D., it was built in the proximity of the Siva temple, though still falling outside the enclosures. The Amman shrine in Chidambaram temple erected in the reign of Kulottunga I, was outside the enclosure of the Siva temple. It was towards the end of Kulottunga's reign, a separate enclosure and an entrance tower were built separately for the Devi. In later times perhaps in 13th century, another enclosure including the Amman shrine was built integrating it with the main lay out. In the famous Meenakshi temple at Madurai, the Amman shrine was separate which was encased within the common enclosure only 16-17th century. However a separate shrine to the Goddess was built in the great temple of Tanjore, within the main prakara in the 13th century A.D. by a certain Pandya ruler whose title alone has survived.

We may not be wrong when we say that Kamakkottams were originally independent Sakti shrines dedicated to the Goddess in her benign aspect as Bhōgesvari in Pallava and Early chola period, which were integrated into the Siva shrine in 12-13th century A.D., when the Saivite and Sakta philosophy developed closely influencing each other.

We must also mention that the development of Devi cult is not an isolated event. From the end of 8th century A.D., the Jains who were averse to femenine principles were greatly influenced by the Hindu movement and began worshipping Yakshi figures in great numbers. It would be appropriate to trace the popularity of Yakshi cult among the Jains to the Devi cult of the Hindu school than *vice versa* as suggested by K.R. Venkatraman.

In many famous temples such as Chidambaram, Madurai, Darasuram, Tribhuvanam, the shrine of the Goddess face the same direction as the main sanctum. However in the great temple of Tanjore, the shrine of the Goddess faces south. But in all cases the Devi shrines were located to the north of the sanctum.

KAMAKSHI TEMPLE OF KANCHI

In 7th cent. A.D.

The earliest reference to Kamakshi of Kanchi as Kamakkotti occurs in the hymn of Thirujnāna Sambandar. Sambandar refers to Siva remaining in union with Kamakoti of Kacci.

Kaccippoli Kāmakkoṭijudan Kūḍi
Iccittu Irum Pūlai iḍam Koṇḍa Īsan.

The word *Kaccippoli Kāmakkoṭi* means Kāmakkoṭi of Kacci. Thus this may be taken to be the earliest reference to Kāmākshi of Kanchi. In fact Sambandar refers in this verse to Siva of the village Irumpulai in Tanjore district as *Irumpūlai iḍam koṇḍa Īsan.* In this case the reference would indicate that the Goddess of Irumpulai was also called Kāmakkoḍi which is not unlikely. We have shown earlier that Appar refers to the Goddess of Thiruvadigai as Kāmakkodi. Appar and Sambandar were contemporaries and lived in the 7th century A.D.

In 8th cent. A.D.

The Saivite saint Sundaramurti who lived in 8th century makes a positive reference to the Kāmakkōṭṭam of Kanchipuram. He refers to *Kacci mūdūr Kāmakkōṭṭam* and says "when the Devi of Kāmakkōṭṭam is here why do you O Lord go about begging." We are therefore certain that by the 8th century A.D. a separate temple to Goddess Kāmākshi, was in existence at Kanchi in the Name of Kāmakkoṭṭam. I am of the opinion that the present Kāmākshi temple is in the same place where it was when Sundarar visited it in 8th century A.D., though the structures have undergone reconstruction.

Kāmākshi Vilāsa

There is a sthalapurāna for the Kāmākshi temple under the title Kāmākshi Vilāsa. It is said to be a part of *Mārkandeya purāna* and is in the form of a dialogue between Mārkandeya and a king, Suratha. This text gives puranic anecdotes connected with all the structures that are held in veneration in Kāmākshi temple today. Some of these structures are of very recent origin and we are therefore justified in holding this work as a late 19th century work. It is said to have been published for the first time in 1889 in telugu script by the Karvet nagar, ruler. In all probability this work was composed then.

There is no need to say that this work is found in none of the *Mārkandeyapurāna* text known to us. The stories enumerated in this text are fantastic and are mainly aimed at glorifying the Goddess Kāmākshi as the Supreme deity. It does not hesitate to create a situation in which Lord Siva is made to fight with Kāmākshi and be defeated by her. The kshetra itself is called *Sivajit Kshētra*. The text tries to localise the story of *Bhandāsura vadha* in this place. It also says that the *mandapa* in front of the sanctum, supported by twenty four pillars, is *Gāyatri* on a *Mahābila* i.e. great hole, where Kāmākshi as Kanya resided, did *tapas* and issuing forth from the hole, reduced the universe to ashes. She then created Brahma, Vishnu and Siva for the universal functioning. The present temple is said to be built over the remains of Bandāsura whose body was burried there. It also gives some stories for the installation of *Yantra*. Sri K.R. Venkataraman in his studies in this temple tries to cull out some history from this concocted text to strengthen his stand. On our part we dismiss this text as purely useless for our study. A few well-known concepts of the Sakta tradition have been taken and rustic stories woven around them. We will examine these few concepts and show their integration into this text.

That Devi did *tapas* to attain Siva is well-known. The association of Mahābila *i.e.* the great hole and the Devi issuing forth from it and burning the universe to ashes and reentering the hole, arise out of the serpent cult. The identification of serpent cult with the Devi cult seem to be very ancient and all-Indian in character. How far ancient is this it is difficult to say. The cult of Mānasā in eastern India, arise out of this identification. It is probably to be traced to the worship of Nagas in the Pre-christian era. The Upanishadic concepts that the Supreme deity resides in Guha such as *Guhām pravishṭau Parame Parārdhe*, also directly influenced these tales.

That the *mandapa* represents Gāyatri is also a similar tale. Since there are twenty four pillars in the *mandapa* the term Gāyatri could have been originally used symbolically, for which a story has now been invented. However the association of the Devi, at Kanchi with serpent hole is earlier to 12th century. Sekkilar mentions this in his Periyapuranam but in a different way. She is said to have been requested by the serpent king, Padmanāga, to reside in his *bila* and do *tapas*. This she accepted.

The fulfilment of sexual desires both in the physical sense and esoteric sense are well-known concepts of the Sākta tradition. The *sthalapurāna* calls the Devi as *Kāmapīta*, *Kāmavardhani*, and *Srngārāmohini*. She is said to have assumed the form, *Manmatha maṇḍala* which shows the fuller expression of Sākta tradition. The text also states that the worship in the temple was based on Rudrayāmala, a tantric text.

Sri K.R. Venkatraman, states that "the Devi exhorted Brahma to install the Devi images in all the Siva temples" which he considers significant. This he cites to show hat Devi images were not in Siva temples originally and they were installed by Brahma newly. K.R. Venkatraman's citations are partial. The *Kāmākshi vilāsa* clearly says, the Devi caused the Devi images in all the temples to disappear so that Siva will be afflicted with Kāma and come to her. It is after this episode that Brahma was asked to reinstall the Gauri images in all the temples. So the Gauri images were there already and Brahma only reinstalled them. We are only citing this to show it would be useless to rely on this text to get any historical data.

Tripura

In the Airavatesvara temple (Rājarājesvara temple) at Darasuram, built by Rājarāja Chola II, in the 12th century A.D. there is an interesting figure of what looks like Ardhanāri. The right half the figure is male and the left is female. It has three heads, adorned with *karandamakuṭas*. Behind the heads, is shown a circular disc. The third eye is visibly shown in the forehead. The deity is endowed with eight arms, holding *akshamāla*, *kadga*, *katvānga* and a lotus flower in the right arms and *pāsa*, *abhaya*, *daṇḍa* and *kapāla* in the left arms. The lower garment in the left is shown upto the ankle while that on the right is upto the middle of the thigh. The figure has many peculiar features. In both the ears, only *makarakundalas* are seen whereas in Ardhanari forms, the right ear will have *makarakundala* and the left a *patrakuṇḍala*. The head dress in all the three heads represent *karandamakuṭa*, which emphasises that this whole is a feminine deity. In Ardhanari images, the right side of the head dress would be jaṭāmakuta, and the left *karaṇḍamakuṭa*. Nūpuras are shown in both the legs which again shows that the deity is a female. The deity also holds in the main right arm, a lotus, which is characteristic of a female deity and yet it is an *ardhanāri* form and as such it is necessary to state what it represents. The whole represents Devi as Parāsakti-Tripurā (Pl. 98) to whom Siva is an *anga*, a part. Thes word, *kaṭvānga*, *daṇḍa*, *pāsa* and *kapāla*, lay emphasis on Tripura Bhairavi aspect of the Devi. The *akshamāla* symbolises *Jnāna*. The three heads will show the Devis embodiment as Durgā, Lakshmi and Saraswati or Iccā Sakti, Kriyā Sakti and Jnāna Sakti.

The *Takkayāgapparani*, a Tamil work by Oṭṭakkūttan is a work composed at the time when the temple at Darasuram was built by Rājarāja II. There are strong evidences to suggest that Oṭṭakkūttan composed his work after seeing the temple and its sculptures. There are two verses in Takkayāgapparani that are of interest in respect of the image under discussion. The Devi is praised, in one of the verses (V 109), to whom Siva is said to form a part. Devi is said to delight in having Siva as her part. She is also extolled (in V 431) as Tripurā Bhairavi. The sculpture at the Darasuram temple is unique and represents Tripurā.

Devi as Mohini

While discussing *Takkayāgapparani*, we have mentioned that Sakti is endowed with most of the aspects of Vishnu. There is an interesting sculpture in a niche of the front mandapa in the Darasuram temple, representing a Goddess. The Devi is shown standing with two arms, holding a lotus in her right arm and *amirta kalasa* in the left. The moving limbs, the most charming face and the captivating smile, makes it the most elegant sculpture that one could see in the Darasuram temple. The sculpture has been identified as Annapūrna by many scholars, but it is not a representation of Annapūrna who should be shown with *annapātra* in the left and a spoon in the right. The Goddess represented here is Devi as Mohini who holds *Amirta Kalasa* from which she distributed ambrosia to the Devas (Pl. 99). A verse (107) in *Takkayāgapparani* extols Devi as Mohini who distributed Amirtapāna to the Devas.

Amarar vālvu valvāga Avunar valvu palaga
Arulum Mohini Āhi Amudapānam īvale.

This sculpture is a representation of Sakti as Mohini who is also called *Vishnu māyā.*

Sakti in Sati Stones

When a woman committed Sati, either by burning herself to death in the funeral pyre of her husband or burrying herself with the body of her husband, she was adored and honoured by erecting Sati stones, also called Masati-stones. Such a custom seems to have gained momentum in the mediaeval period and are seen in large numbers in Karnataka region. This custom was also in Vogue in Tamilnadu from the Sangam period. However Sati stones are very rarely met with in Tamilnadu. So far only two inscribed stones have come to light both coming from the regions contiguous with Karnataka region.

However a few Pallava panels, recently brought to light, can now defenitely be identified as Sati stones. The principal distinguishing feature in these panels, is the representation of two arms issuing from a shaft (Pls. 101 & 102). In well-known inscribed Sati stones of mediaeval period, one or two arms are shown issuing from a shafts. The representation of arms, issuing from a shaft is a common motif in Sati stones.

Another distinguishing feature is the representation of two *apsaras* holding flower or chouri in their arm, flanking a pair of human beings shown with their arms in *anjali* pose. The human pair thus standing in between represent the dead husband and the wife who committed Sati. When a hero dies he is said to ascend heaven in a divine chariot accompanied by *apsaras*. In hundreds of hero-stones that have come to light, the representations of hero, being accompanied by the *apsaras*, either holding flowers or chouri are seen. In the panel under discussion the *apsaras* flanking the human pair, signify the couple being accompanied to the *devaloka*.

In such panels, a number of deities are represented (either shown seated or standing) besides the arms and human figures. In general all the deities are shown seated on a common pedestal and are shown in the following order. First is shown Brahma; then is Siva in the form of linga. To his left is shown invariable Pārvati seated. Then Subrahmanya and Narasimha are represented. In some panels Narasimha is followed by *Sri* in the form of *Srivatsa*. There are panels in which Ganesa and Jyeshṭā are also shown. A panel from Peddamuḍiyam, now preserved in the Madras Museum shows Durga as Mahishāsuramardini in addition to the other deities.

The representation of various Gods in these panels signifies the attainment devaloka by the dead pair. They had achieved the unique distinction of reaching not only heaven but also standing face to face with all the Gods. The representation of both Saivite and Vaishnavite deities in the same panels, shows the sectarian bias has not yet emerged strongly as it did in late mediaeval periods. Special mention must be made of the portrayal of Sakti invariably with Sivalinga and in many cases, Sridevi with Narasimha. Both the principal Gods are shown with their consorts giving audience to the couple who have arrived from *manushyaloka*. This emphasises the importance given to the femenine principle, in these Sati stones. It is of interest to mention that many such women who committed Sati were deified and often identified with Durga or Kāli in later periods. Such Sati stones have come to light from Munnur, Kanchipuram, Manimangalam, Ukkal, Utteramerur, Brahmadesam and Tenneri, all in the Pallava territory.

VIII

SAKTI WORSHIP AS GLEANED FROM EPIGRAPHS

So far as Tamilnadu is concerned, written documents in the form of lithic records begin to appear from the 2nd Century B.C. Most of the epigraphs ranging from 2nd Century B.C. to 2nd Century A.D., are associated with Jaina abodes, referring to the name of the monks or the donors of the abodes.

From the reign of the great Pallava ruler Mahendravarman (600 A.D.), the epigraphs begin to make pointed reference to Sakti, in her various manifestations. Mahendra's inscription at the upper rock cut cave, refers to the constant company of Umā with Siva, in a dramatic form.

कावीरीं नयनाभिराम सलिलां आराममालाधरां
देवो वीक्ष्य नदीप्रियः प्रियतमां अप्येषरज्येत् इति
साशङ्का गिरिकन्यका पितृकुलं हित्वैव मन्ये गिरौ
नित्यं तिष्टति पल्लवस्य दयितां एतां ब्रुवाणा नदीं

The Kuram grant of Paramesvara Pallava, begins with salutations to Siva as Visvamurti who is evidently the five faced Sadasiva.

पञ्चास्यः त्रिशदर्घ प्रति भय नयनः
चन्द्रमौलिः त्रिशूली
भीम व्यालोपवीति दशभुजपरिघः
तत्वमात्रत्म मूर्तिः
दिव्योऽवेक्ष्यः मुकुन्द प्रभृतिभिः
सृष्टिकृत् मन्त्रसिद्धः
कर्ता नो मूर्तिविद्या विहित परयमः
त्रायतां विश्वमूर्तिः

Siva bestows Sakti, who is responsible for *Kriyasadhana* on devotees says the next verse in the same grant.

कार्यंव्यूह कला क्रमस्य परम व्योमामृत ज्योतिषः
विद्वन् मानस चन्द्रकान्त पतितः मूर्च्छंन्ति यस्यांसवः
भूतानां हृदयेषु चानयति यः शक्ति क्रिया साधनीं
त्रय्यात्मा परमेश्वरः स जयति त्रैलोक्यचूलामणिः

Siva, seated on top of Sumeru mountain as a great Yogin with Umā is mentioned in the benedictory verse of the Udayendram copper plate grant of Nandivarman.

सुमेरु गिरि मूर्द्धंनि प्रवरयोग बद्धासनं
जगत्रय विभूतये रविशशाङ्क नेत्रद्वयम्
उमासहितम् आदरात् उदयचन्द्र लक्ष्मीप्रदं
सदाशिवं अहं नमामि शिरसा जडाधारिणम्

The Kasakkudi plates (8th Century) of Nandivarman Pallava include in the benedictory verses, adoration of Lakshmi and Durga. Durga is called Arya, Bhagavati and Vishnu's sister.

दृष्ट्वा ललाटे नयनं भियेव
कामो न यामीश्वर इत्युपास्ते
विष्णोः स्वसा सा
भगवत्यलक्ष्मीं
आर्या कदार्यां क्षिपुतात् क्षणेन ।

The other point of interest in this verse is, that the Devi is said to be worshipped by Kama. The Lalita Sahasranama, calls Devi as Kamapujita. The concept was popular in the Tamil land even in 8th Century is attested by this grant.

Rajasimha's inscription at Mamallapuram and Saluvankuppam refer to the Somaskanda aspect.

इह गिरितन्या गुह गण सहितः
नियत कृत रतिः भवतु पशुपतिः

Mention has been made earlier of the installation of the image of Goddess Nisumbasudani at Tanjore by Vijayalaya around 850 A.D.

ततः प्रतिष्टाप्य निशुम्भसूदनीं
सुरासुरैः अर्च्चित पादपङ्कजाम्

The adoration of Devi as the Supreme Goddess, whose blessings were sought for even the mighty emperors, for their conquests, and well beings is pointed by this inscription. The installation of Mahakalattu Bhatari (obviously Chandika) at Nemam in Tanjore District, by the Muttaraiya Chieftain Perumbidugu Muttaraiya in the first half of 9th Century is recorded in a pillar inscription now in Sendalai. That the Pallava ruler Tillarerinda Nandi, and the Pandya ruler Maran Sadaiyan visited this temple of Bhatari personally and gifted gold and wealth speak of the popularity of the Devi cult in the 9th Century A.D.

Recently an inscription has been exposed on a pillar behind the shrine of the Goddess in the northern part of the prakara of the great temple of Tanjore. The inscription is dated in the reign of Rajaraja Chola I and refers to the endowment for the Goddess Umaparamesvari, in prakara of the temple. The pillar on which the inscription is found, is in front of a small shrine which obviously enshrined the Goddess. The inscription for the first time shows that even from the time of Rajaraja, a separate shrine for the Goddess were built in the Siva Temples. However, from the end of the 11th Century, from the reign of Kulottunga Chola I, such temples assumed very great importance and were called Kamakottam Udaiyanachiyar. Several inscriptions refer to such shrines in the Siva temples. A few select inscriptions on such Devi shrines are appended at the end, References to Sakti are innumerable in mediaeval and late mediaeval literature, which would require an exhaustive treatise. I am therefore appending a few inscriptions for the convenience of the readers.

SELECT INSCRIPTIONS ON KAMAKKOTTAM

1. An inscription in Tamil in the Tirukkalukkunram Udaiyar temple Tirukkalukkunram, Chingleput district dated in the 20th year of Chola king Tribhuvanachakravartin Kulothunga chola deva records a gift of sheep for a perpetual lamp to the Goddess *Tirukkamakotta-Nachchiyar* (A.R.E. 136/1932-33).

2. An inscription in Tamil in the Adavallar temple dated 23rd year in the reign of the Chola king Tribhuvanavartin Konerinmai Kondān records a gift of land made tax free for the expenses to the shrine *Tirukkāmakkoṭṭa-Mudaiya-Periya Nāchchiyār* (A.R.E. 89/1919).

3. An inscription in Tamil in the Tirupperumanamudaiyār temple dated 32nd year in the reign of the Chola king Tribhuvanachakravartin Tribhuvana Vira deva, records a gift of land to the shrine of *Tirukkamakkotta mudaiya Nachchiyar* (A.R.E. 530/1919-21).

4. An inscription in Tamil in the Siva temple, Sirudavur, Chingleput Taluk, Chingleput District, dated 12th year Chittirai 26, in the reign of Sambuvaraya King Sakalalokachakravartin Rajanarayanan, records a remission of some specified taxes on two veli of devadāna land belonging to the God and the *Nāchchiyār* (A.R.E. 93/1933).

5. An inscription in Tamil in the Atmanayaki Amman temple Tirukkalakkudi dated in 14th year, of Pandya king Maravarman alias Tribuvanachakravartin Sundara Pandya deva records that at the instance of the king's nephew Kulasekhara deva, certain lands situated in Kumattakkudi, a village of Kana-nadu, were made tax free and given to the Goddess of *Pidāriyār Alagiya Nāchchiyār*. (A.R.E. *of the A.A.S. Vol. VI 1916-18*) (A.R.E. 61/1916-18).

6. An inscription in Tamil in the Minakshi Amman Temple, Kolinji Vadi, Dharapuram Coimbatore district, dated in the reign of the king Tribuvanachakravarti Konerinmai Kondan, records a gift of land to the Goddess *Tirukkāmakkoṭṭa Nāchchiār* (S.I.I. Vol. V 260).

7. An inscription in Tamil in the Nellaiyappar temple Tirunelveli Taluk, Tirunelveli District dated 34th year in the reign of the Pandya king Sundara Pandya devar records a gift of tank for the irregation purpose to the offering of the Goddess *Nāchchiyār of Tirukkāmakoṭṭam* (S.I.I. Vol. V, No. 408).

8. An inscription in Tamil in the Sokkanathasvamin temple Kolinjivadi, Coimbatore District dated 30th year and 51st day in the reign of the Chola king Tribuvanachakravartin, Konerinmai Kondan records a gift of land free of all taxes in Anukampallam alias Amarabhayankara to the Goddess *Tirukkāmakoṭṭattu Nāchchiyār* alias *Alagiyasokkiyār* (A.R.E. 155/1920).

9. An inscription in Tamil in the Sokkanathasvamin temple Kolinjivadi, dated 30th year and 56th day in the reign of the Chola king Tribuvana Chakravartin, Konerinmai Kondan records another gift of land to the same Goddess *Tirukkāmakoṭṭattu-Nāchchiyār* alias *Alagiya Sokkiyār* (A.R.E. 156/1920).

10. An inscription in Tamil in the Sokkanathasvamin Temple Kolinjavadi, Coimbatore District dated 29th year and 235th day in the reign of the Chola king, Tribuvana-Chakravartin, Konerinmai Kondan records a gift of land to the same Goddess *Tirukkāmakoṭṭattu nāchchiyār* alias *Alagiyasokkiyar* in the temple (A.R.E. 157/1920).

11. An inscription in Tamil in the Kailasanata Temple Tentiruppera, Tiruchendur Taluk, Tinneveli district dated 11th year in the reign of the Pandya king Jaṭāvarman alias Tribuvana Kulasekara Dēva records some endowment by the king for the worship of Goddess *Tirukkāmakkoṭṭattu Āludaya Nāchchiyār* (A.R.E. 286/1939-43).

12. An inscription in Tamil in the Kailasanatha temple Singikulam, Nanguneri Taluk, Tinneveli District dated 33rd year and 61st day in the reign of the Pandya king Maravarman alias Tribuvanachakravartin (Kula) Sekara Deva records an endowment made by the king of land to the Goddess *Tirukkamakkottamudaiya-Nachchiyar.* (A.RE. 262/1939-43).

13. An inscription in Tamil in the Govardhani Amman shrine in Subramanya Temple Tirupparankunram, Madura Taluk, Madura District dated 43rd year in the reign of the king Tribuvanachakravartin Konerinmai Kondan records a gift of land of the *Tirukkamakkottam* (A.R.E. 387/1918).

14. An inscription in Tamil in the Govardhani Amman shrine in the Subramanya temple Thirupparankunram, Madurai Taluk, Madurai District dated 43rd year in the reign of the king records a similar grant of land to the same shrine (A.R.E. 338/1918).

15. An inscription in Tamil in the Govardhani Amman shrine, Subramanya temple, Tirupparankunram, Madurai Taluk, Madurai District dated 42nd year in the reign of the Pandya king Maravarman alias Tribuvanachakravartin Kulasekahra deva records a gift of land of the *Tirukkāmakkoṭṭattu Āludaya Nāchchiyar* (A.R.E. 339/1918).

16. An inscription in Tamil in the Nellaiappar temple, Tirunelveli Taluk, Tirunelveli District in the reign of the Kerala king, Sri Buthalaveeraramavarmar records a gift of the land to the Goddess *Nāchchiyār Tirukkāmakkottattu Āludaiya Nachchiyar.* (S.I.I. Vol. V 409).

17. An inscription in Tamil in the Nellaiyappar temple Tinneveli, Tinneveli Taluk, Tinneveli District dated in the reign of the Naick king, Srimath Viswanatha Krishnappa Naicker, records a gift of land to the Goddess *Nachchiyar Tirukkamakkottattu Aludaiya Nachchiyar* (S.I.I. Vol. V 410).

18. An inscription in Tamil in the Muruganatha temple Tirumuruganpundi, dated, 4th year in the reign of the Kongu Pandya king Jatavarman records that the paving of the floor of the *ardhamandapa* of the shrine of the Goddess *Irugunannidai mangaiyār* (A.R. of the AAS Vol. VI 1916-18).

19. An inscription in Tamil in the Sangamesvara Temple Vedavalli Amman shrine, Bhavani, dated Parthiva tai 20 records that the front *ardhamandapa* of the shrine of *Pannarmoliyamman* at Thiruvanikudal was the benefaction of Immadi Ketti-Mudaliyar and Sinnammal (A.R.E. 232/1950-51).

20. An inscription in Tamil in the Sangamesvara temple Bhavani dated Vikrama, Chittirai that Immadi-ketti Mudaliyar constructed a procession path round the shrine (tirunadai maligai), the front nritya mandapa and the Sikhara (Pinnacle) of God Nannavudaiyasvamin and also the central shrine the *ardhamandapa* and the *mahāmandapa* of the Goddess *Pannār* (*molī*)-*amman* (A.R.E. 229/1950-51).

SELECT INSCRIPTIONS ON DURGA

1. An inscription in Tamil in the Selliyamman temple Kilachchur (Vellore Taluk) near Pallikonda dated in the reign of the Chola king Parthivendra varman records that Punkuran Uttamasivanathan, an officer of Sola Prithivigangaraiyar whose territory extended to Kallodu constructed (on behalf of his master) the Vimana of the Goddess *Vadapalamandal* (Durga) at Nandikampa Chaturvedimangalam in Pali-nadu a subdivision of Paduvur-Kottam (A.R.E. 23/1938-39).

2. An inscription in Tamil in the Ainjanjandi Durgaiyār of Kanchipuram dated 18th year of the Chola king Rajaraja records gift of 60 Kalanju of gold by the residents of Sirumanraiyur, a devadana situated in Ambi-nadu in Eyyilkottam for burning four perpetual lamps in the name of the king in the temple of *Ainjanjandi-Durgaiyār* of Kanchipuram (A.R.E. 78/1919).

3. An inscription in Tamil in the Kachapisvara temple (on the eastern wall of the Durga shrine) big Conjeevaram, Chingleput district, dated in 3rd year of Parakesarivarman alias Rajendra chola deva records that a gift of 95 sheep by a private individual of Alisavur in Alisavur-nadu, a subdivision of Kaliyur-Kottam to the temple of Ainjanjandi Durga battāraki (A.R.E. 74/1921).

4. An inscription in Tamil on the east wall of the Durga shrine in the Kachapisvara temple, Big Kanchipuram, Chingleput district, dated in the 16th year of the Chola king Rajendra choladeva, records a gift of gold by Nigarili-lokamadevi, a servant of the queen Mukkokkilānadigal and by a temple dancing girl called Perri Ponnambalam, for two perpetual lamps to be burnt in the shrine of the Goddess *Ainjanjandi-Durgaiyar* (A.R.E. 73/1921).

5. An inscription in Tamil dated in the 18th year of the Chola king Rajendra choladeva records a gift of gold by a private individual of Māgaral, in Eyir kottam, for offerings and worship to the Goddess *Durgaiyār* during the *pushya* day in the month of Aippasi, every year (A.R.E. 77/1921).

6. An inscription in Tamil, on the base of the month and west walls of the Durga shrine in the Kachapisvara temple dated 18th year of the Chola king Rajaraja, Rajakesarivarman records gift of 60 Kalanju of gold by the residents of sirunanraiyur, a devadana, situated in Ambi-nadu in Eyil-Kottam for burning for perpetual lamps in the name of the king in the temple of *Ainjanjandi Durgaiyār* of Kanchipuram (A.R.E. 78/1921).

7. An inscription in Tamil in the Lakshminarayana Perumal temple at Sinnamanur dated in the reign of the Chola king Rajendra chola devar, records sale of land for a lamp to the shrine of *Durga Paramesvariyar*, by the assemblies of three villages *viz*. Arikesarinallur, Arapādasekara mangalam and Mandaragaurava mangalam (A.R.E. 439/1908).

8. An inscription in Tamil in the Siva Temple, Eydanur, Cuddalore, South Arcot district, dated 28th year of the Chola king Rajakesarivarman alias Kulotunga choladeva records the different amounts of money received prior to the 28th year of the king by several sivabrahmanas from Thirvayindran Viraiyan and Meykilan of Eydanur for burning lamps in the temples of Tirumandurai-Andar at Colakulavallinallur in Pattampakkai nadu, a sub division of Gangaikondasola Valanadu and Ganapatiyar in the same village (A.R.E. 141/1933-34).

9. An inscription in Tamil dated in the reign of the Chola king Kulottunga choladevar (42nd year) records that the lands belonging to the temple of *Emalattu Durgaiyar Onkara sundariyar*, situated in the eastern hamlet of this village with the temple flower garden and tank were registered as a village gift to the said goddess under class 12. This land was renamed *Bhupala sundara vilāgam* after democrating the lands and fixing the boundaries (A.R.E. 207/1919).

10. An inscription in Tamil in a dry land called Nattakkollai, Ariyūr, Tirukkoyilur taluk, South Arcot district record the *nonbu* observed by a certain lady in the temple of Durga characters belong to the 11th century A.D. (A.R.E. 234/1936-37).

11. An inscription in Tamil in Tevadiyakuppam, South Arcot district dated 27th year of the Chola king Tribhuvanachakravartin Rajarajadeva III, registers a gift of the village Attamalayamanpatti, in Vanagoppadi-nadu by Akarasuram Tiruvannamalai perumal alias Rajagambira Chediyarayan for offerings and worship to the God Vayirisuramudaiya Nayanar alias Erivalan Chydanayanar and *Durgaiyar* at Sanbai (A.R.E. 450/1937-38).

12. An inscription in Tamil in the Lakshmi Narayanasvamin temple Mudigondam dated in the reign of the Hoysala king Vira somesvara deva records gift of a garden to the temple by the mahajanas of *Durgaiyar-agaram* (A.R.E. 7/1910).

13. An inscription in Tamil in the Vijāghrapurisvara temple Pulippakkam, Chingleput, dated in 14th year of the Telugu Chola king Vijay Gandagopala devar, registers

a similar gift by the Pillaiyarmudali belonging to the temple, for a twilight lamp to be burnt before the image of *Durga*, set up by him in the temple (A.R.E. 10/1932-33).

14. An inscription in Tamil (Vatteluttu) in the Tiruvaludisvara temple, perungulam, Srivaikuntam Taluk, Tinneveli district dated in the reign of Pandya king Jatavarman alias Sundara chola pandyadeva records a gift of 25 sheep lay, a vellala named Ikkansiriyan for a sacred lamp to the image of *Durgaiyar* in the temple of Tiruvaludisvara at Perungulam alias Uttamacolanallur in Tiruvaludi valanadu, a district of Uttamcola Valanadu in Rajaraja Pandinadu (A.R.E. of 1932-33).

15. An inscription in Tamil, in the Durga temple Attuvampadi Polur Taluk North Arcot District dated, Saka 1374 of the Vijayanagara king Virapratapa Praudha Mallikarjuna deva Maharaya remarks an order of Mahapradhana Ganapanna Dannayakkar to the tanattar of the several temples including Dharmisvaramudaiya Nayanar and Umapatiswaramudaiya Nayanar allotting this annual contribution of *jodi* and *sulavari* taxes amounting to 90 panam payable at 7½ *panam* amount, for the daily midday offerings and worship in the temple of *Prasanna Durga devi* for the merit of the king (A.R.E. 94/1939-40).

16. An inscription in the Aruvampadi (Polut taluk) North Arcot district, dated Saka 140 (9) year of the Vijayanagara king Narasingaraya mahārāya records an order of Bupparasar the agent of Nagama-Nayakar who was the *mugappavadai* of the king making a gift of the tax *Kadukaval-Varttanai* realised from the hill forest near Arruvanpadi to provide for scented unguents and other materials for the Goddess *Prasanna Durgadevi* on special occasions for the increasing prosperity of the king and of Nagama Nayaka (A.R.E. 93/1939-40).

17. An inscription in the Durga temple Attuvampadi, Polur taluk, North Arcot district dated saka 1434, year of the Vijayanagara king Krishnaraya maharaya records the sale of the village Malaiyampatti, for 500 panam to Tirumalai-Nayakka son of Ekkappa Nayakka, a Kannadiyanayaka of Marudarasar-Padaividu, by a number of persons who fixed its rent as 20 *panam* and 50 *Kalam* of paddy per annum which had to be paid by the purchaser to the *Durga* temple (A.R.E. 92/1939-40).

18. An inscription in Tamil in the Durga temple Atturampadi, Polur Taluk, North Arcot district, records appointment of two shepherds, Ilaiyperumal and pirattialvar paying taxes at 5 panam each to Murugamangalapparru and Andinadu respectively as the *tiruvilakkukkudi* for measuring out ghee of that value to the *Prasanna Durgadevi* temple for a perpetual lamp on behalf of idaitturai Chinnamarajar (A.R.E. 91/1939-40).

19. An inscription in the Durga temple Attuvampadi, Polur taluk, North Arcot district dated in the reign of the Vijayanagar king Virapratapa Vira Bhu (Patiraya) Maharaya records the endowment of the (entire) village Arrutampadi for offerings and worship to *Durgadevi* (A.R.E. 95/1939-40).

20. An inscription in Tamil in Pugaippatti, Tirukkoyilur taluk, South Arcot district specifies the *mayana* land belonging to a Kuttadi, probably attached to the *Durga* temple.

SELECT INSCRIPTIONS ON KĀLI

An inscription in Tamil on the slab set up at the Kaliyamman Temple in the village, Colapuram, Vellore Taluk, North Arcot district records a *Pidari* temple constructed by Nangai Mani, daughter of Ari kandan wife of Prithvigangaraiyar (A.R.E. 426/1902).

An inscription in Tamil in the Tirukkamesvara temple, Kappalur, Polur Taluk, North Arcot district seems to be the concluding portion of a record in which it is stated that the Mannudaykar (?) of the village should first offer worship in the *Pidari* temple and then in the *Kadugal* Kottam (A.R.E. 287/1938-39).

An inscription in Tamil near the Siva temple Timmichchur dated 5th year of the Chola king Parakesarivarman records an endowment of sheep for the lighting of the hall (*ambalam*) built at Timisur, Timisur-nadu by Mummudisola-Kadupattigal and certain taxes for the expenses of maintaining it. It also states that the donor consecrated the goddess *Pidari* in a shrine built by him (A.R.E. 37/1936).

An inscription in Tamil in the Selliyamman temple at Alambaḳkam records that the temple of Pidari was constructed by a certain Irayar Alankara priyan alias Tiruorriyuran and seems to register a gift of land for offerings (A.R.E. 704/1910).

An inscription in Tamil in the Salliyamman Temple at Velachcheri, Saidapet Taluk, Chingleput district records a gift of land as *manjikkam* by the sabha of Velachcheri in Puliyur, Kottam for the maintenance of perpetual lamp and for offerings during the two year service in the temple of *Kala Bhatari* (A.R.E. 317/1911).

An inscription in Tamil in the Selliyamman temple Velachcheri, Saidapet Taluk, Chingleput district dated in 4th year of the Chola king Parakesarivarman records a gift of land to the temple of *Kāla-Bhatari* at Velachcheri in Puliyur Kottam by the assembly of the village (A.R.E. 317/1912).

An inscription in the Maduvanesvara temple at Tirukkalavur dated 27th year of the Chola king Madirai konda Parakesarivarman, gives a list of the lands owned by the temples of Mahadeva, *Kala-Pidari* and Maha Vishnu at Pala-Tirukka (ru) gavur (A.R.E. 42/1910).

An inscription in Tamil in the Aiyanar temple Kottamangalam, Tiruchirappalli district dated the reign of the Chola king Parakesarivarman records some provisions made for food offerings and a lamp to Brahmisvaran Udaiya nayanar of Korramangalam; two others refer to grant of land. The fourth mentions *Pidari*. In characters of the 14th and 15th century (A.R.E. 657/1962).

An inscription in the Jnanaparamesvara temple Tirumeyjnanam, Kumbakonam, dated in the reign of the Chola king Parakesarivarman, refers the boundaries of a land are mentioned those belonging to God Tirupparkadal Devar, and *Bhitariyar* (S.I.I. XIX No. 452).

An inscription in Tamil at Karandai, Tanjore Taluk dated in the reign of the Chola king Ko-parakesari records the sale of right to do worship in the Siva temple and *Pidari* and *Kali* temple in Karuntittai Kudi to a certain Ramesvaramudaiyan by two priests of the temple of Karuntittaikudi (S.I.I. Vol. V 1412).

An inscription in Tamil in the Bramhapurisvara temple Pullamangai, near Pusupatikoil, Papanasam taluk dated in the reign of the Chola king Parakesarivarman records gift of land to the Goddess *Kala Pidari* (S.I.I. Vol. IX No. 63).

An inscription in Tamil in the Vedaranyesvara temple Vedaranyam, Tirutturaippundi Taluk, Tanjore district dated 18th year of the Chola, king Parantaka I, records an endowment of 25 *Kalanju* of gold on Sankranti day by *Koyilanachchipidariyar*, wife of Sembian Muvendavelar for food offerings to the deity Tirumaraikkattu madevar from out of the interest accuring from the endowed amount (S.I.I. Vol. XVII/484).

An inscription in Tamil in the Selliyamman temple Karadi, dated 20th year of the Rashtrakuta king Kannaradeva records a gift of 96 sheep for a perpetual lamp in the temple of *Pidari Idaimalai-Nangai* to the south east of the village Ravikulachulamani Chaturvedimangalam of the southern bank of Penni in Vanagoppadi, by shepherd who entrushed it to the local sabha (A.R.E. 218/1936-37).

An inscription in Tamil in the Brahmapurisvara temple Pullamangalam, Pusupatikoyil Papanasan Taluk, Tanjore district, dated in the reign of the Chola king Uttama chola records that the *mahasabha* of Pullamangalam a Brahmadeya village in Kilar-Kuvram which met together after beat of drum in the courtyard in front of the temple of Tiruvalandurai, sold tax free a land 1½ ma in extent situated in Kandamangalam to the temple of *Kala pidari* in the centre of their village for 25 *Īlakkāsu* (S.I.I. Vol. XIX No. 63).

An inscription in Tamil in the Siva temple Tiruppanamur cheyyar taluk, North Arcot district, dated 23rd year of the Chola king Rajaraja deva records an endowment for lamps to the Parivaradevas such as *Ganapathi*, *sapta-matrikas*, *Subramanya*, *Tirukkettaikilatti-Bhatari* i. e. *Jyeshtadevi*, *Durga*, *Chandesvara* and *Kshetrapala*, in the *tiruvunnaligai* of the temple Urani-Nakkar at Parampur in *Srikamakottapuram* (A.R.E. 154/1939-40).

An inscription in Tamil in the *Pidari temple* Nangavaram, Kulittalai taluk, Kulittalai district dated in the reign of the Chola king Ko-Rajakesari (S.I.I. Vol. VIII 655).

An inscription in Tamil dated in the reign of the Kongu-chola king Virarajendradeva records that Yalvallam Ullalaichchevagam, a mudali of Kiranur in Pongalurkanadu engraved on stone and copper the gift of land made by his grandfather Somanathadevar alias Anuttirppallavaraiyar for offering to the Goddess *Rangapidariyar* (A.R.E. 175/1919).

An inscription in Tamil in the Mahalingesvamin temple Tiruvidaimarudur dated in the reign of the Chola king Tribhuvana chakravartin Konerinmaikondan records gift to the shrine of the *Pidari Yogirunda-Paramesvari* in the fourth Prakara of the temple (A.R.E. 307/1908).

An inscription in Tamil on a slab set up in a field called Paruttirattan-Kollai, Memalur, dated 35th year of the Chola king Kulottunga choladeva states that an image of *Pidari* was set up by Perumal Palli, a workman of Memalur in Kurukkai-Kurram, a subdivision of Miladu alias Jannathavalanadu (A.R.E. 230/1936-37).

An inscription in Tamil in the Jnanaparamesvara temple Tirumeyjnanam, Kumbakonam Taluk, Tanjore district registers a sale of 521 Kuli of land tax free, by the Perunguri *perumakkal* of the Mahasabha including the Battapperumakkal of Nalur, a brahmadeya in Sevur Kurram for 5 Kalanju of gold to a merchant of the village named Narana Tallam, who endowed the same after purchase to the temple of Tirumayanadeva. Among the boundaries of this land are mentioned those belonging to god *Tirupparkadal Devar Bhitariyar* (Bhatari) (S.I.I. Vol. XIX No. 452).

An inscription in Tamil in the Apratisvara temple Nagar, Lalgudi Taluk, Trichy district, dated in the reign of the Chola king Kulottunga seems to refer to the lands alloted to the temple servants *viz.* priests, paricharakas and svayampakis. Refers to the land Turaimugam chey and mentions a *Pidari koil* among the boundaries (A.R.E. 685/1962).

An inscription in Tamil in the Baktajanesvara temple Tirunamanallur, Tirukkoyilur Taluk, South Arcot district dated in the reign of the Chola king Kulottunga chola deva records gift of money for burning lamps before the image of *Tiruvidi-Nachchiyar* set up in the temple by a certain Siuttondan (A.R.E. 264/1939-40).

An inscription in Tamil in the *Pidari* temple at Neyyadipakkam, Kanjeevaram, Chingleput dated 13th year of the Chola king Kulottunga chola deva records gift of 1½ kasu by a private individual for a lamp to be burnt in the *Pidari* temple at Neyarrupakkam in Terodu Paluvur nadu a subdivision of Kaliyur Kottam, a district of Jayangonda sola mandalam (A.R.E. 261/1922).

An inscription in Tamil in the Tiruvirattanesvara temple at Tiruvadi Cuddalore Taluk, South Arcot in the reign of Sambuvaraya records gift of 3000 kuli of land by Samuvaraya for providing sandal paste to the Goddess *Chamundi Nachchiyar* set up in the temple of Tiruvirattanam Udaiya Nayanar (A.R.E. 384/1921).

An inscription in Tamil in the Tiruvallisvara temple, Padi, (Tiruvatidayam) dated in the 3rd year of the king Tribhuvanachakravartin-Vijaya Gandagopaladeva records, a dancing girl of the Tiruvegambam Udaiya-nayanar temple of the Goddess Tiruvidinachchiar in the temple at Tiruvallidayam and presented both to the God and Goddess a number of jewels and vessels (A.R.E. 217/1911).

An inscription in Tamil in the Siva temple Sirudavur, Chingleput Taluk, Chingleput district dated 7th year in the reign of the Pandya king Jatavarman Tribuvana Chakravartin Sundara Pandya deva records a remission of taxes by order of the king through his officer (Mudali) Pillai Irungolur on several pieces of land purchased by the temple authorities and the *nyayattar* of the village from a certain Rajendrasola-Tagadurnadalvan and others for requirements of the Goddess *Aranavalli Nachchiyar* in the temple (A.R.E. 94/1933-34).

An inscription in Tamil in the Devapurisvara temple at Tevur, Nagappattinam taluk, Tanjore district dated 1 (I) 1287 A.D. in the reign of the Pandya king Jatavarman Sundara Pandyan II records refer only the name of a *Pidarikovil* (A.R. 518/1904 Vol. XVII).

An inscription in Tamil in the *Sivaparipurani shrine* in the Tribuvananathesvara temple at Tenmalai Sankaranayinar koil, dated 6th year in the reign of the Pandya king Jatavarman alias Tribuvanachakravartin Vira Pandya deva registers a sale of land by the assembly of Sundara Pandya Chaturvedi Mangalam, a brahmadeya in Arinadu, for the requirements of the Goddess of *Sivanaimuludumudaiya Nachchiyar* who was set up in the temple of Tiruppattisvaramudaiya-Nayanar by Tiruvanaikkavudaiyan-Udayadivakaran alias Venadudaiyan, a native of Kugur in Vadavettani alias Sundara Pandya Valanadu mentions the temple of Tirumolisai Vinnagar Emberuman (A.R.E. 613/1915-16).

An inscription in Tamil in the Virapandisvaramudaiya Nayanar temple dated 5th year and 334th day in the reign of the Pandya king Tribuvanachakravartin Konerinmai Kondan records a gift of land and house sites to certain Brahmans for reciting the Vedas for making a flower garden and for providing offerings to the temple of Virapandisvara mudaiya nayanar built in the name of the king by a certain Vaidyachakravarti. The Goddess is called *Veyanatoli-Nachchiyar* (A.R.E. Vol. IV 1919/12 B. No. 510 stone inscription *1918*).

An inscription in Tamil in the Pidariamman temple Dalayaypattanam, Coimbatore taluk, Dharmapuri district dated 24th year in the reign of the Kongu Pandya king Tribhuvanachakravartin Sundara Pandya deva records a gift of gold for a twilight lamp to the *Pidariamman* called *Nanadesa Nangai* (A.R.E. 158/1920).

An inscription in Tamil in the Kakolanatha temple at Tirukkalakkudi, Ramnad district dated 7th year in the reign of the Pandya king Jatavarmān alias Tribhuvanachakravartin Sundara Pandya Deva records a gift of land by purchase for celebrating the festival to the image *Nachchiyar Udaiyandar* set up in the shrine of *Pidariyar Alagiya Nachchiyar* by a native of Kulasekarapuram in Kalvagil Nadu. (A.R. of the AAS. Vol. VI 1916-18 p. 69).

An inscription in Tamil in the Arikesanatha temple at Giriyambapuram dated in the reign of the Pandya king Jatavarman alias Tribhuvanachakravartin Kula (Sekhara deva) records gift of 8 achchu for a perpetual lamp by a lady. Another gift of 2 achchu for the Goddess *Periyanachchiyar* is also recorded (A.R.E. 466/1916-17).

An inscription in Tamil in the Osuramma shrine Tiruvur, Tiruvallur Taluk, Chingleput district dated Vrishika SU 10, record on endowment of land as garden (Sringaratottam) made by the Mahajanas of Turugur to the Goddess *Ellamma* (A.R.E. 87/1947-48).

An inscription in Tamil in Mutyalamman shrine Velanadal, Polur Taluk, North Arcot district dated Saka 1550 in the reign of the king records an endowment of Venkatādri Nayaka of Nellippattu (A.R.E. 89/1942-43).

An inscription in Tamil in the Mutyalamman shrine dated Suk(la) Masi (10) in the reign of the king records a grant of another bit of land to the same Goddess by Raghupati Nayaka (A.R.E. 90/1942-43).

An inscription in Telugu in the Poleramma temple dated saka 1335 Pramadi in the reign of the Kakatiya king Mahamandalesvara Prataparudradeva Maharaja records provides for offering to the temple of *Ganga Paramesvari* (A.R.E. 585/1910).

An inscription in Tamil in the Nellaiyappar temple Tinneveli, Tinneveli taluk, Tinneveli district dated 22nd year in the reign of the Cera king, Keralan Kulasekaran records a lake in the name of *Kāli* near Kunrathur in Tinneveli district (S.I.I. Vol. V 450).

An inscription in Tamil in the Renukamba temple Padavedu Polur taluk, North Arcot district dated in the reign of the Vijayanagar king Kumara Timmaraya Udaiyar record an order by an agent (name lost) of the king to one Aiya Noyan to supply a flower garden (to the temple on specific occasions) mentions a garden called Somadevanttam (A.R.E. 49/1940-41).

An inscription in Tamil in the Renukamba temple Padavedu Polur Taluk, North Arcot district, dated saka 1394 in the reign of the Vijayanagara king Mahamandalesvara Narsingaraya Udaiyar records an order of Pradhoma Nayinar of Padaividu, the agent of the king treating as manya, the fees received in the temple of *Ekkaladevi amman* or ordinary days and festival occasions (A.R.E. 41/1940-41).

An inscription in Tamil in the Mariamman temple Padakam, Polur taluk, North Arcot district dated Saumya Avani in the reign of the king records the provision made for reading the Puranan in the matha constructed by Suryabhattar (170/1941-42).

An inscription in Tamil in the Renukamba temple Padavedu Polur taluk, North Arcot district dated saka 1484 in the reign of the Vijayanagara king, Srirangadeva Maharaya records an order of Idaitturai Tambikkon and Kavanayakkon, the agents of china Bommu Nayakarayyan of Velur appointing four persons as Tiruvilakkuk-kudi for the annual supply of ghee for burning lamps and for the sacred bath of Goddess *Prasanna Ekkaladevi* ammai of Nurudarasar Padaividu on the days of Tiruvadirai and of four sheep each day on the days of Mahanavami and Panguniuttiram (A.R.E. 45/1940-41).

An inscription in Tamil in the slab in a private land Narasingapuram Polur taluk, North Arcot district dated Plavanga in the reign of the Vijayanagara king Venkatapati Maharaya records a gift of land to Goddess *Ellamman* (A.R.E. 150/1941-42).

An inscription in Tamil in the Bairava temple Tiruvalangadu, Tiruttani division dated saka 1442 in the reign of the Vijayanagara king Mahamandalesvara Krishnadeva Maharaja records a transaction made by the acharyas of the four Mandapas assembled at Nagaladeviammapuram with the blessing of *Kalikadevi* (A.R.E. 193/1942-43).

An inscription in Tamil in the Kali temple Pugaippatti, Tirukkoyilur taluk, South Arcot district dated Chitrabhanu, Panguni 13 in the reign of the king records a gift of land by Rama Nayaka, son of Seppili Ellappa Nayakka for service in the temple of the Goddess *Pidariyar*, for the merit of Siddhamanayani Annamalai Nayaka (A.R.E. 358/1937-38).

An inscription in Tamil in the Pidari temple Nangavaram, Kulittalai taluk, Kulittalai district dated 4th year in the reign of the Chola king, Kovirajakesari Panmar records a gift of two *Nali* rice for Tiruvamudu to the Goddess of *Pidariyar Sattanur Nangai* (S. I. I. No. 655 A.R. No. 346/1903).

An inscription in Tamil in the Pidari temple Nangavaram, Kulittalai taluk, Kulittalai district dated in the reign of the Chola king Madirai Konda Kopparakesari Panmar records a gift of land to the Goddess *Mahakalattu Padariyana Sattanur Nangai* (S.I.I. No. 654, A.R. No. 345/1903).

An inscription in Tamil in the Pasupatisvara temple Allur, Trichinopoly taluk, Trichinopoly district dated 17th year in the reign of the Chola king Madirai Konda Kopparakesari Panmar records a gift of land to the Goddess *Kaliyar Thudavai* (A.R.E. 381/1963).

An inscription in Tamil in the Virattanesvara temple Tiruvadi, Cuddalore taluk, South Arcot district dated 23rd year in the reign of the Chola king Rajendrachola Devar, mentions the name of the village *Pidari Patti* (S.I.I. 316 A.R.No. 42/1903).

An inscription in Tamil in the slab set up at Tiruvadavur, Melur taluk, Madura district dated in the 16th year in the reign of the Pandya king Komaravarman Tribuvanachakravartin Sri Sundara Pandya Devar records, mentions the name of the Goddess *Samundesvari* (A.R.E. 135/1903).

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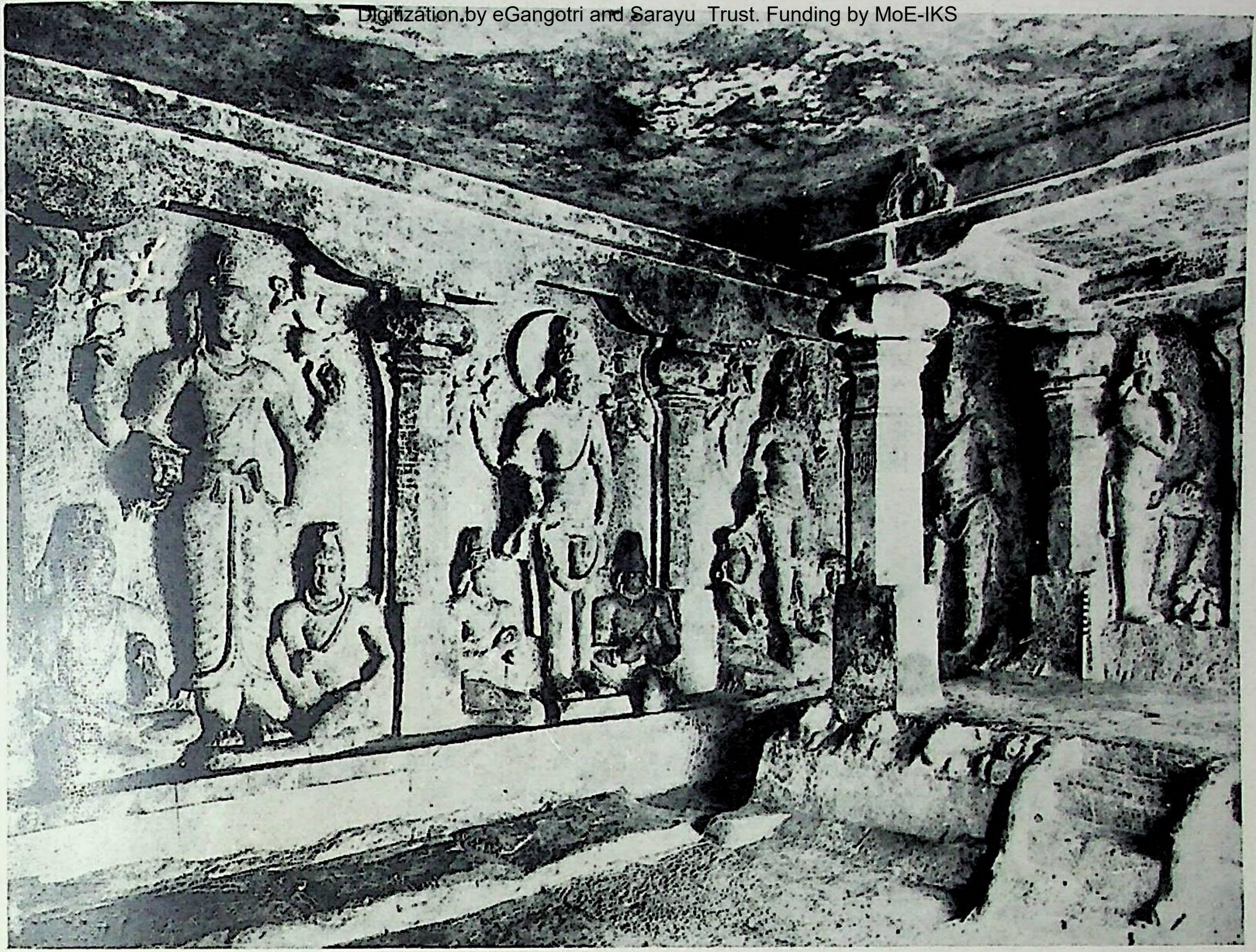
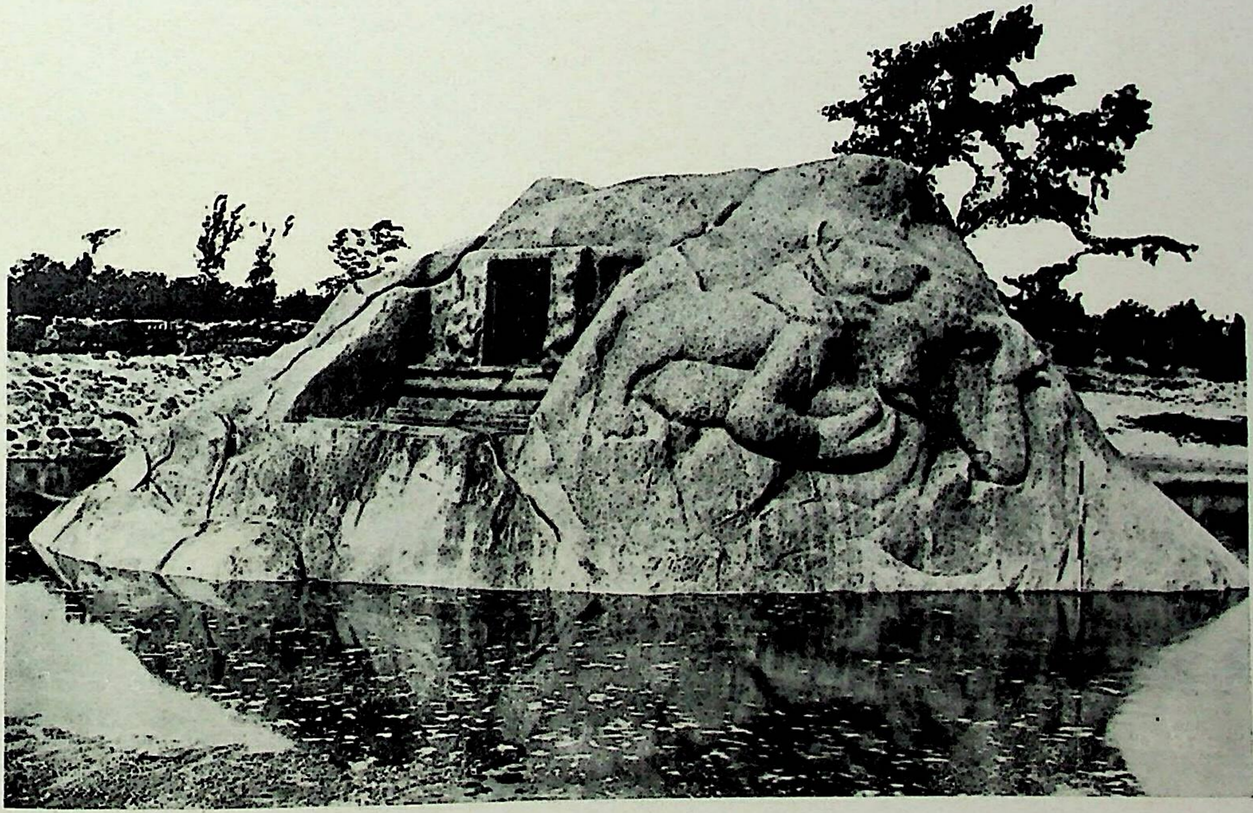
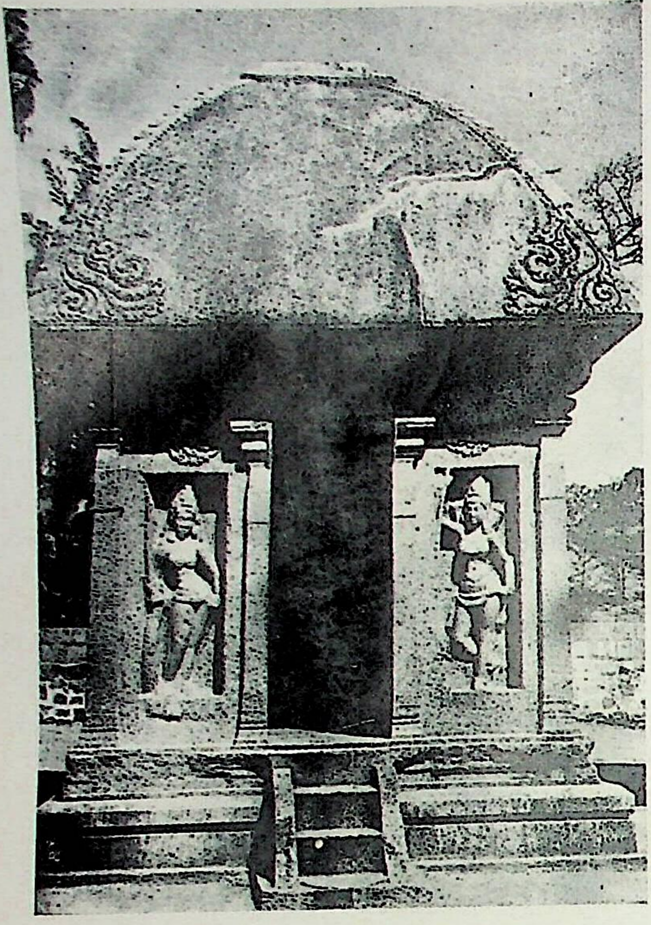


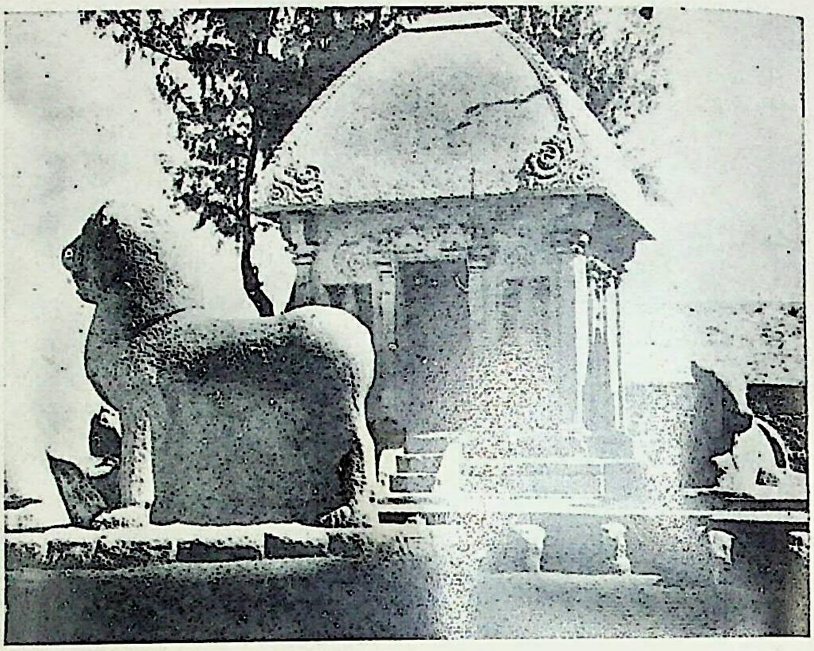
1. A view of the lower rock cut cave Thiruchirappalli, dedicated to Siva and Vishnu. At the back wall are Ganesa, Subrahmanya, Brahma, Surya and Devi as Durga. That Durga is given equal importance with other deities may be seen from the representations wherein Durga appears at the end.



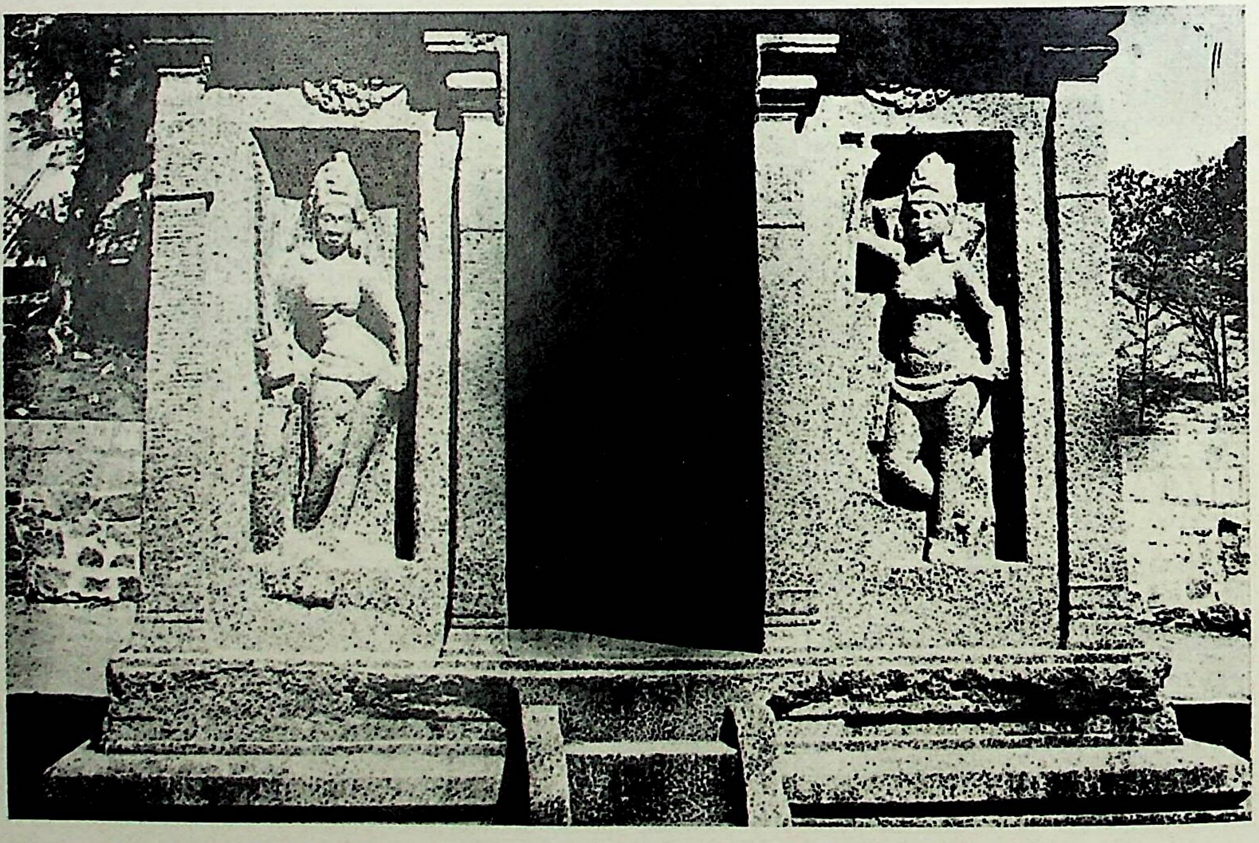
2. The Mahisha cave, to the north of sea-shore temple Mahallapuram showing Devi's lion attacking the monstrous Mahisha.



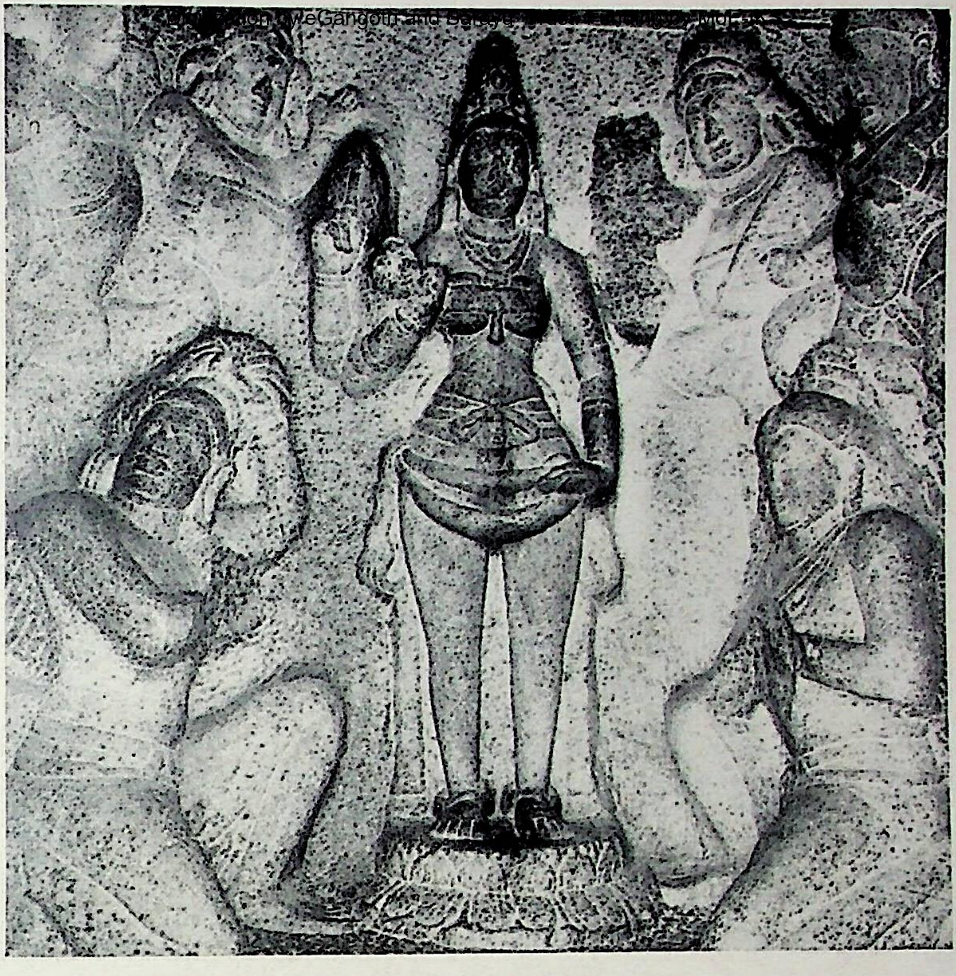
3. The monolithic temple of Durga, now called Draupadiratha, Mamallapuram, 8th cent. A.D.



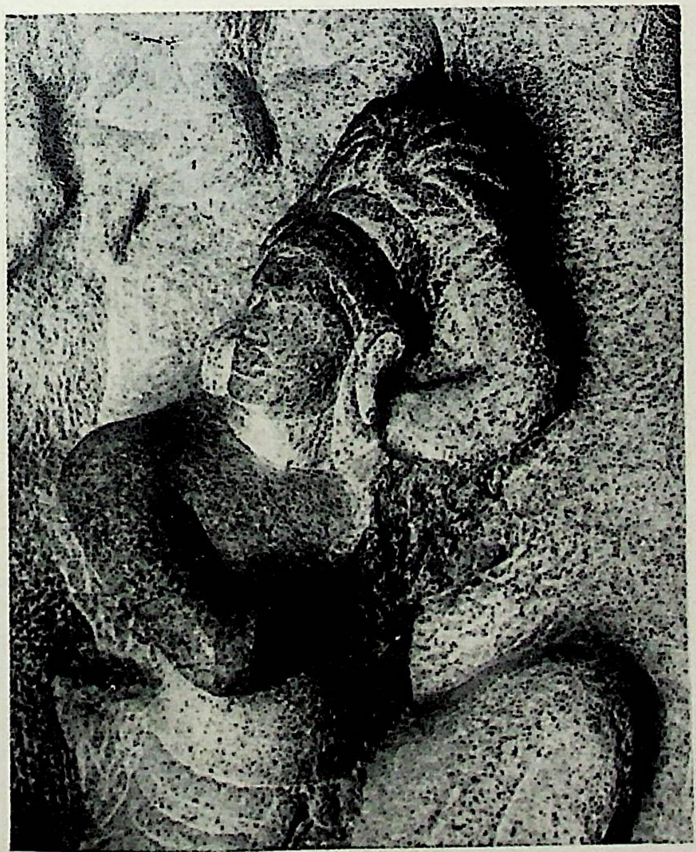
4. The temple of Durga (Draupadiratha) with lion mount of the Devi shown in front.



5. The female guardians of the Devi (Jaya and Vijaya) shown in Draupadiratha, Mamallapuram

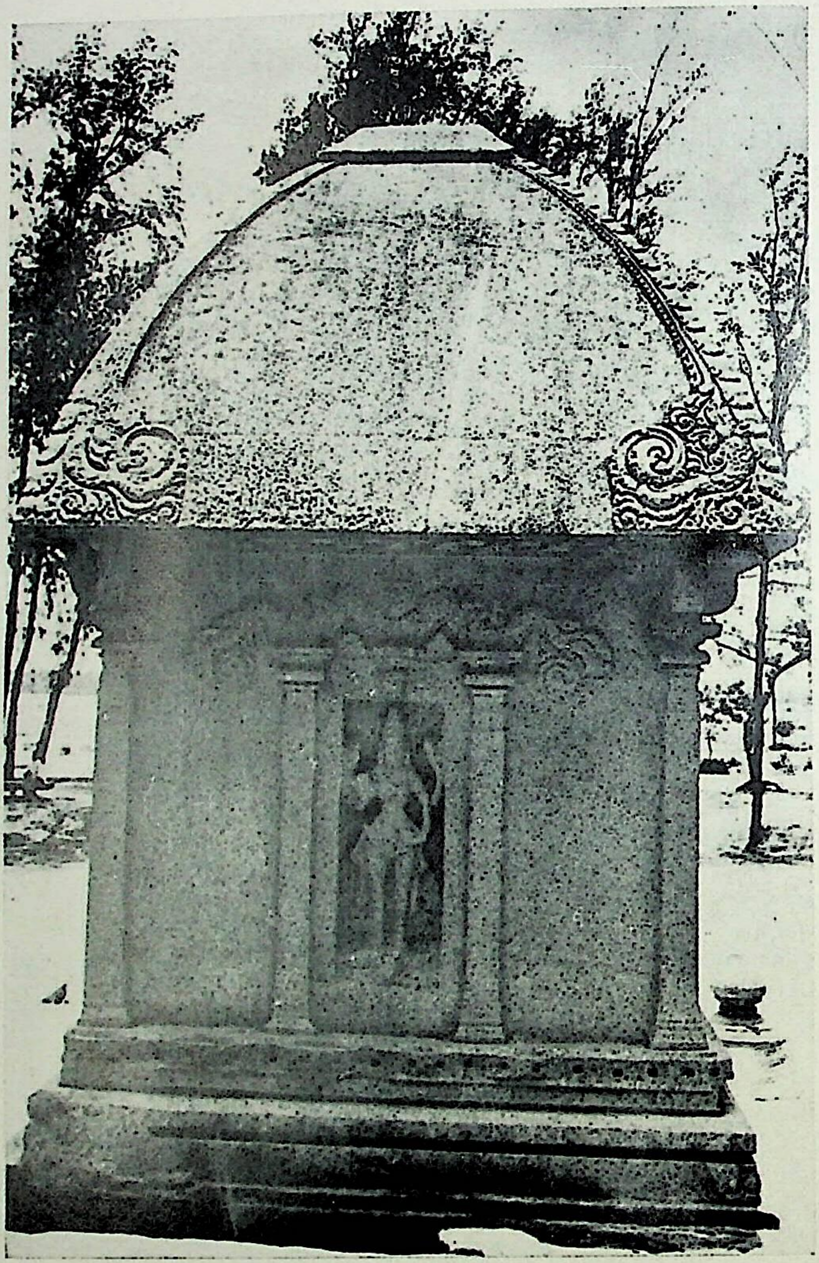


6. Devi as Paradevata standing on a lotus pedestal (not on Mahisha's head) inside the sanctum of Draupadiratha.

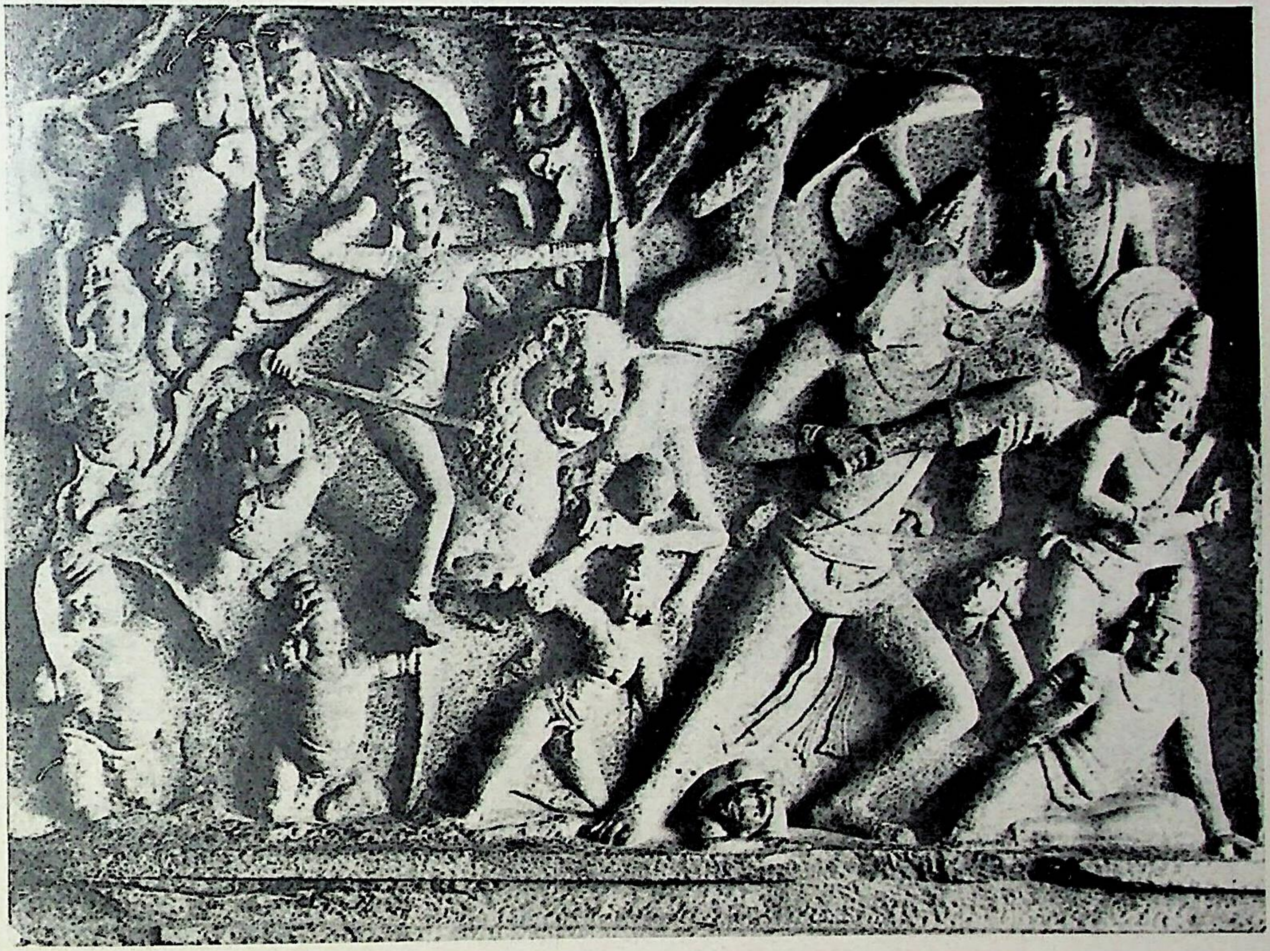


7. A hero offering his own head to the goddess.

8. The attendents of the goddess.

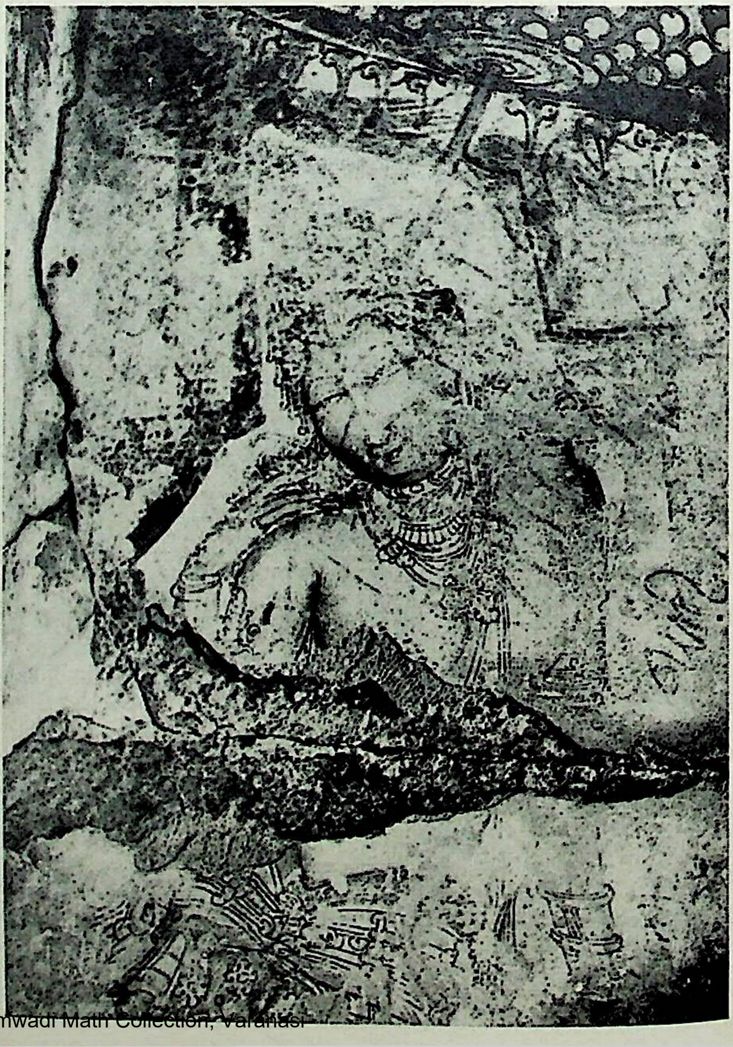


9. Durga shown in a niche at the back of the Draupadiratha, Mamallapuram. In this monolithic temple dedicated to Durga, all the three main niches around the *garbhagriha* carry the image of Durga. The simple hut shape of the temple may also be noted.

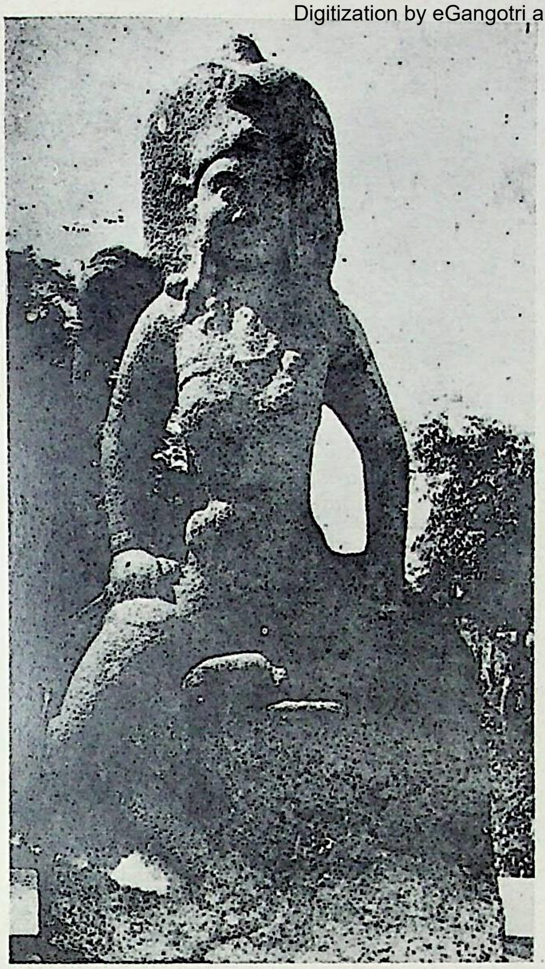


10. The saga in stone. The great scene of Mahishasuramardini, Mamallapuram.

11. The lion mount of the Devi in the seashore temple, complex, Mamallapuram.



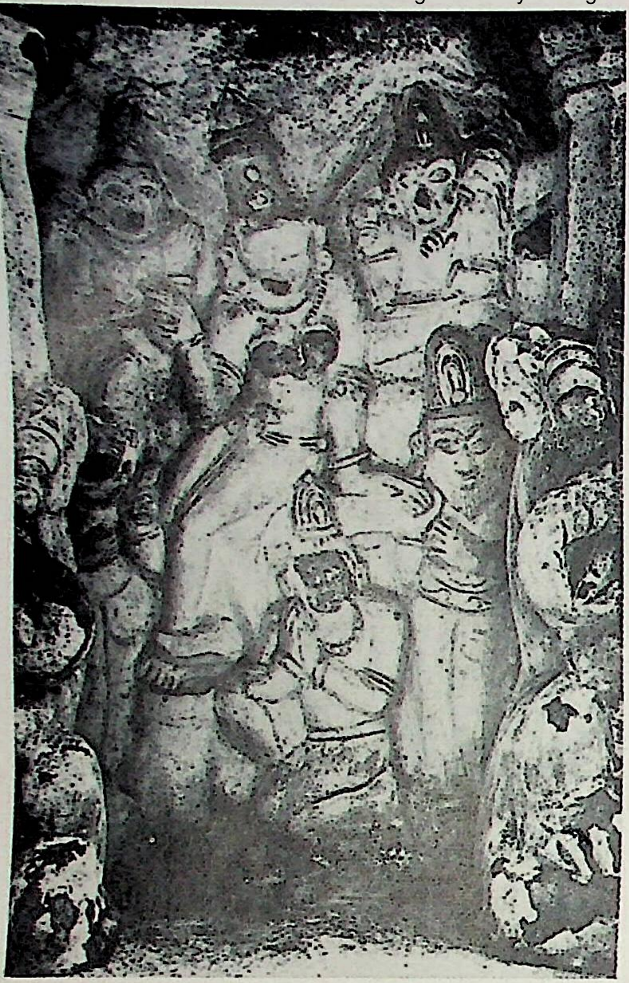
12. Devi as Bhavani witnessing the dance of her master-Siva-Pallava fresco, 8th cent. Panamalai.



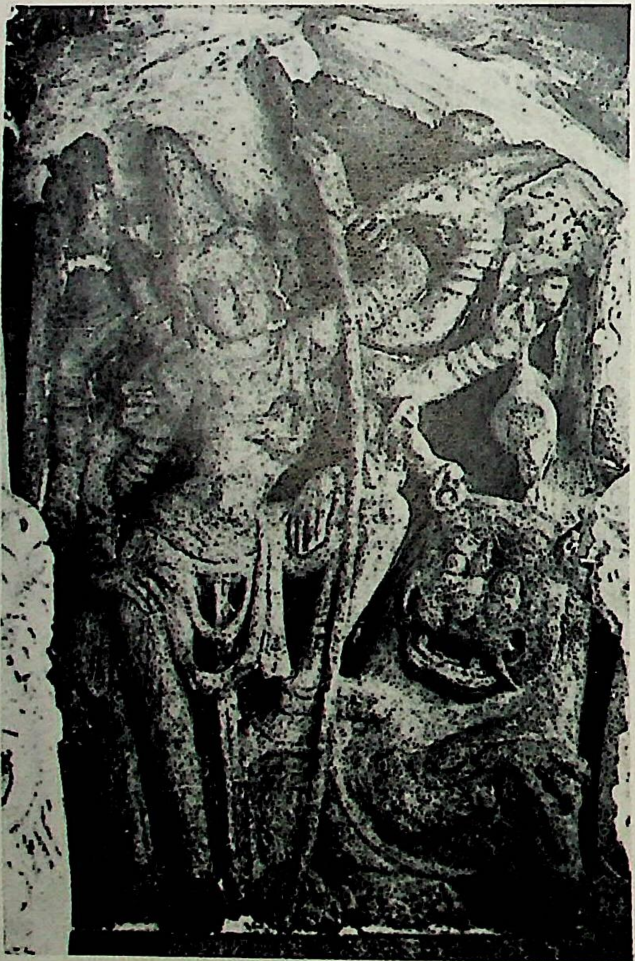
13. Candika, the great Goddess, Mamallapuram, Pallava, 8th cent. A.D.

14. Somaskanda in the seashore temple-Mamallapuram, Pallava, 8th cent. A.D.

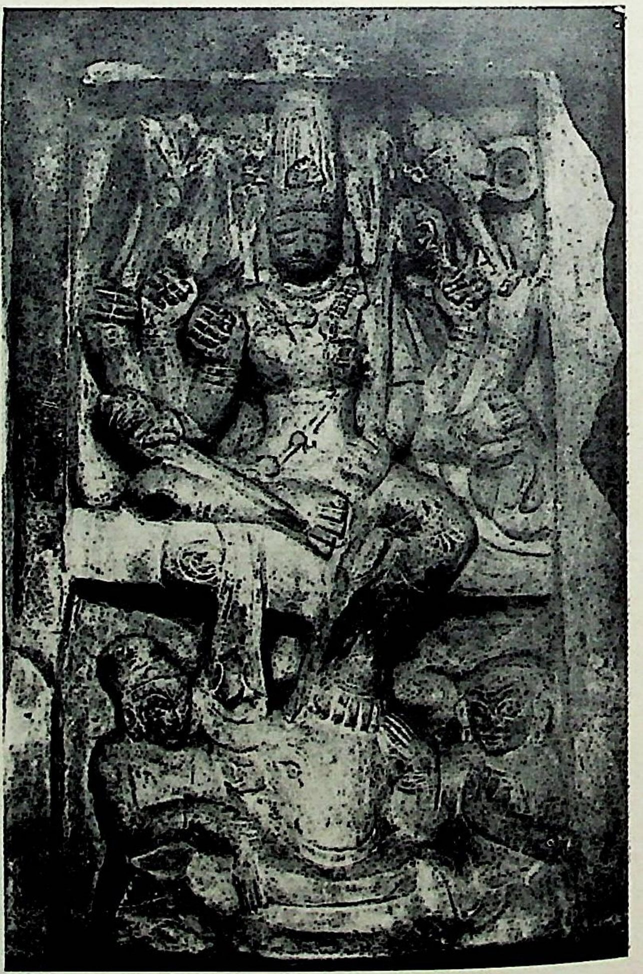
15. Vina Vadini Devi found on the enclosure wall of the Kailasanatha temple of Kanchipuram. Pallava, 8th cent. A.D. The *Syamaladandaka* praises the love of music of the Devi as '*Manikka vinam upalalayantim.*' The *Navaratnamalika* states "*Vamanke nihita vinam*".



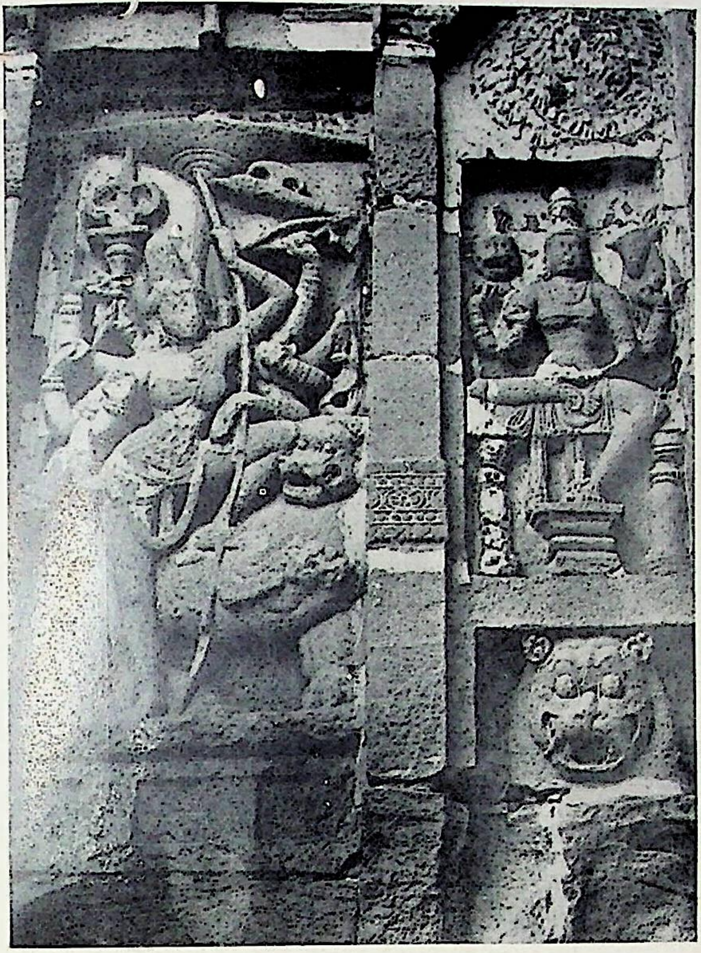
16. *Deva rshi sanghata stuyamana Atma vaibhava* says *Lalita sahasranama*. This sculpture found on the enclosure wall of the Kailasanatha shows that the concept was fully developed in the Pallava times in the 7th-8th cent. A.D.



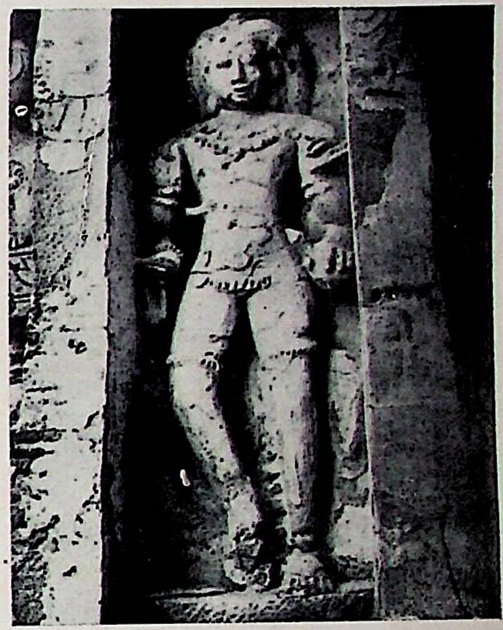
17. Durga in the cloistered cell south of the main shrine of Kailasanatha temple Kanchi.



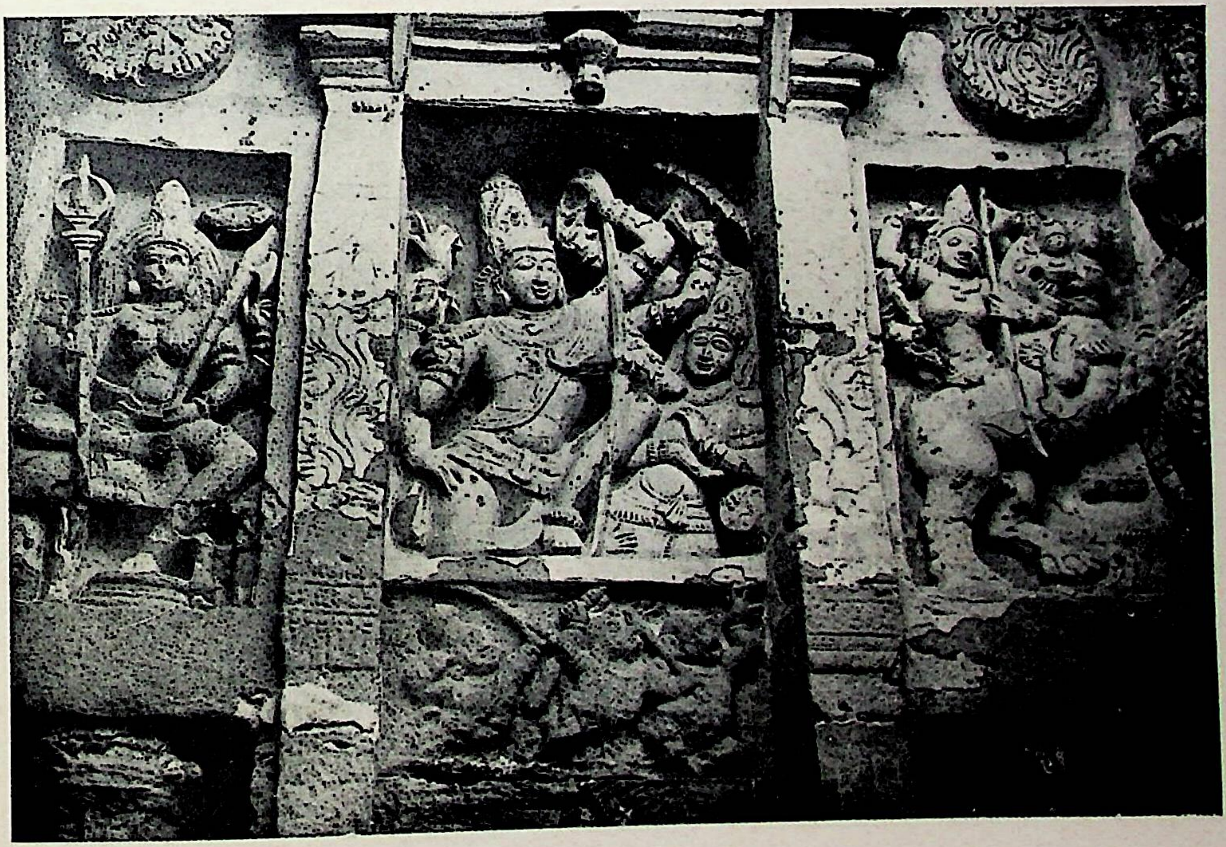
18. Mahishasuradamani in cell south of main shrine Kailasanatha temple, Kanchi.



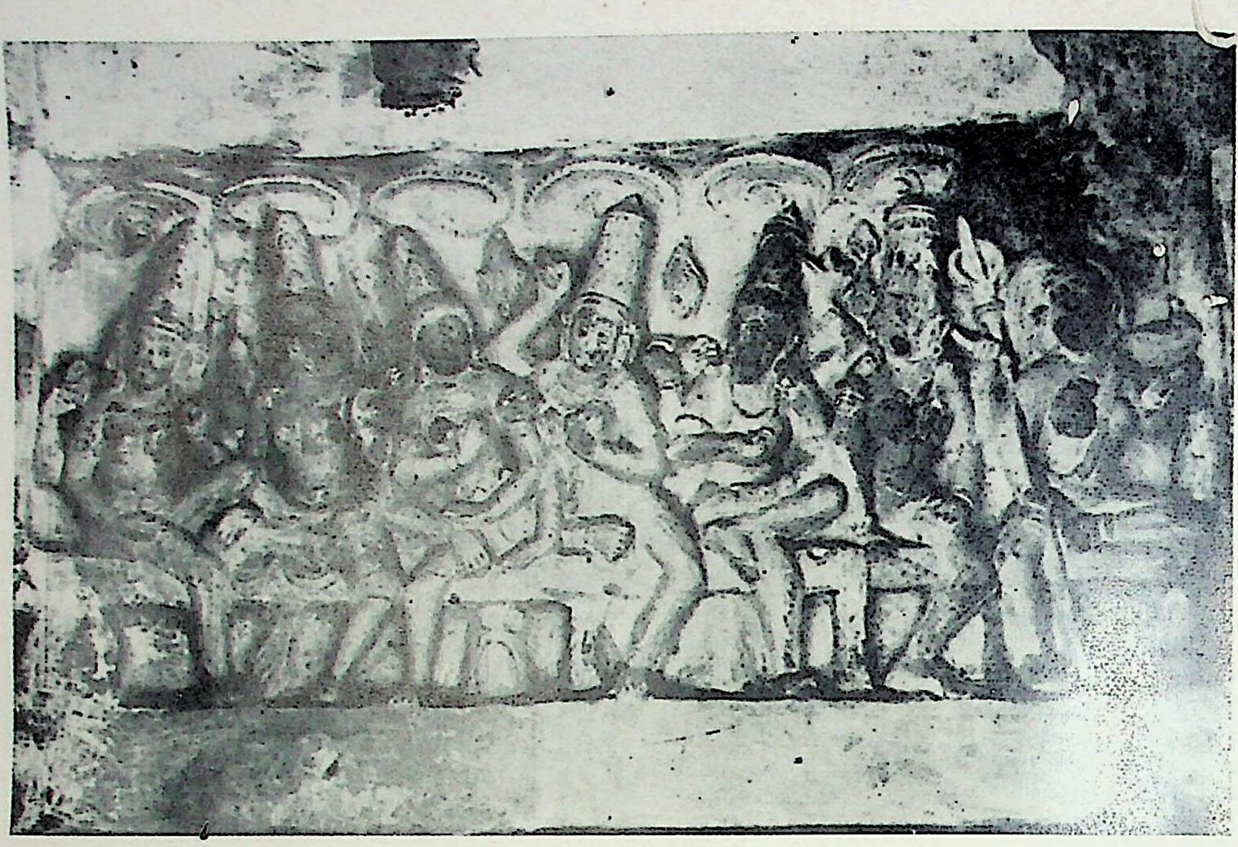
19, Durga and Mahayogesvari on the north wall of the central shrine, Kailasanatha temple, Kanchipuram.



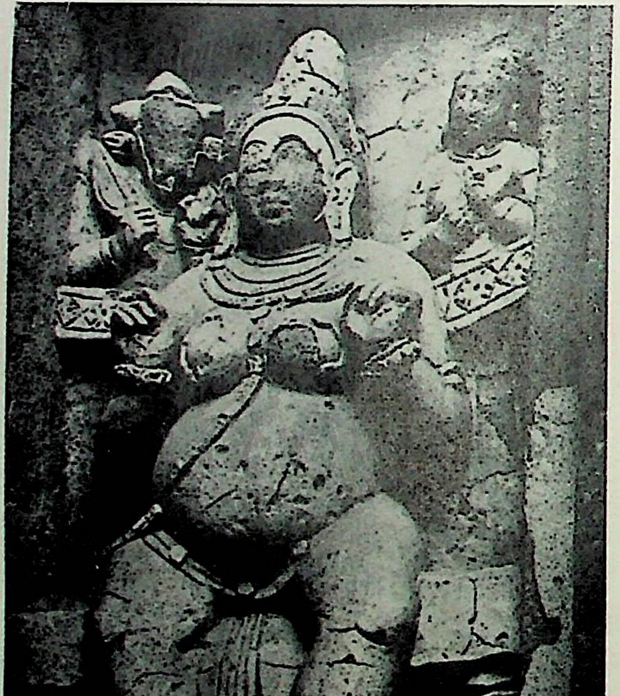
21. Bhairava, Kailasanatha temple Kanchipuram.



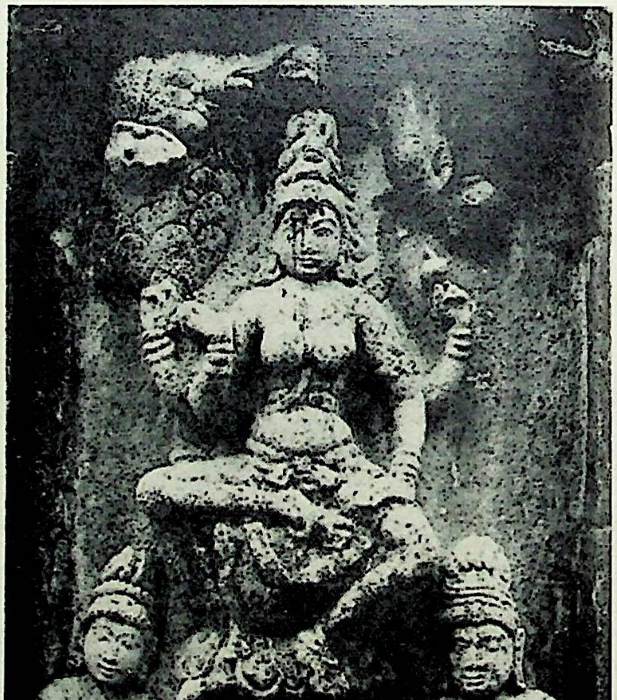
20. In the centre is Tripurantanka to his left is Tripura to his right Tripura Bhairava, on the north wall of the Kailasanatha temple-Kanchipuram.



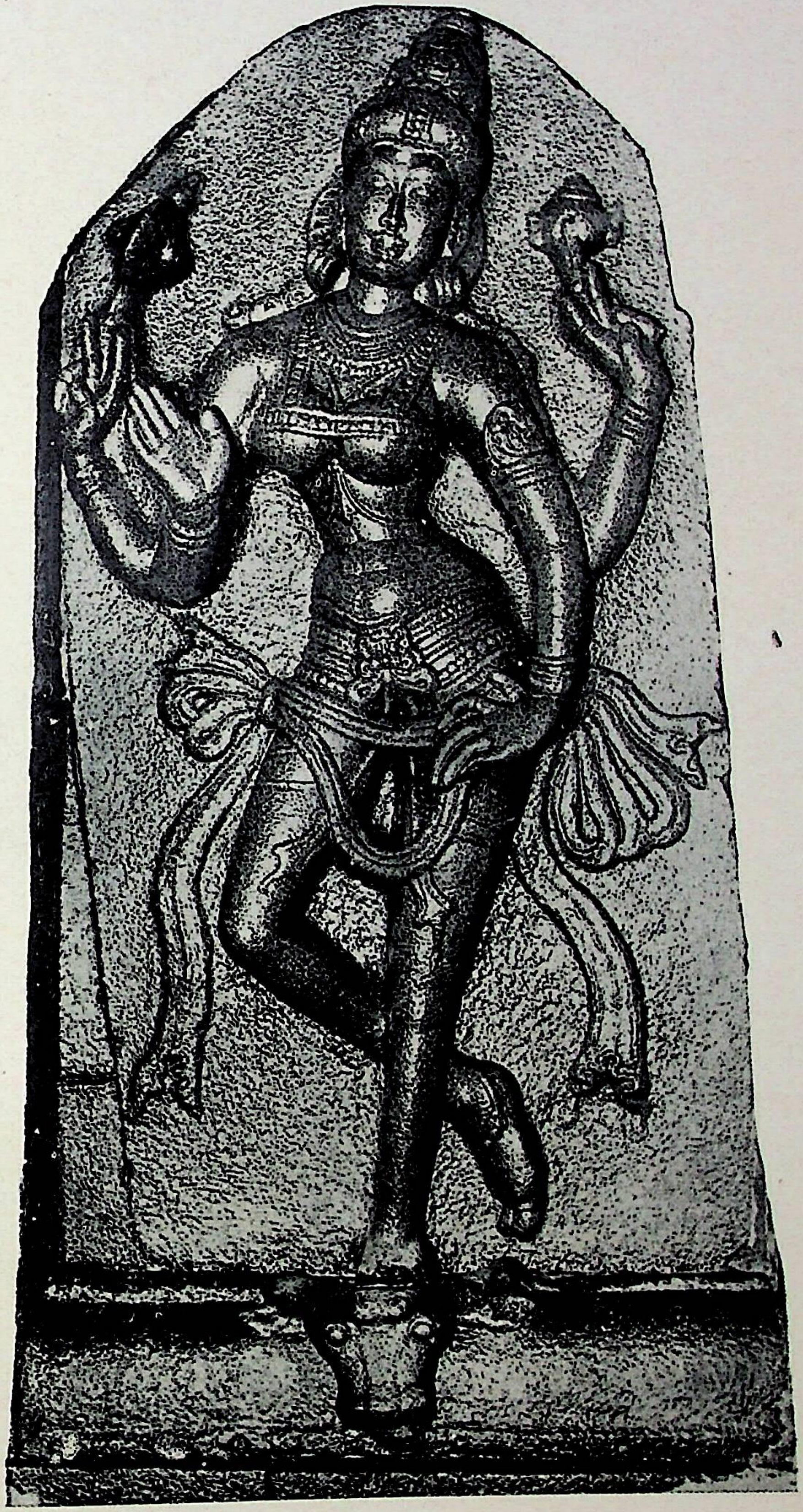
22. Saptamatas on the enclosure wall South of the main shrine, Kailasanatha temple, Kanchipuram. Brahmi, Mahesvari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrani, and Camunda are seen in order.



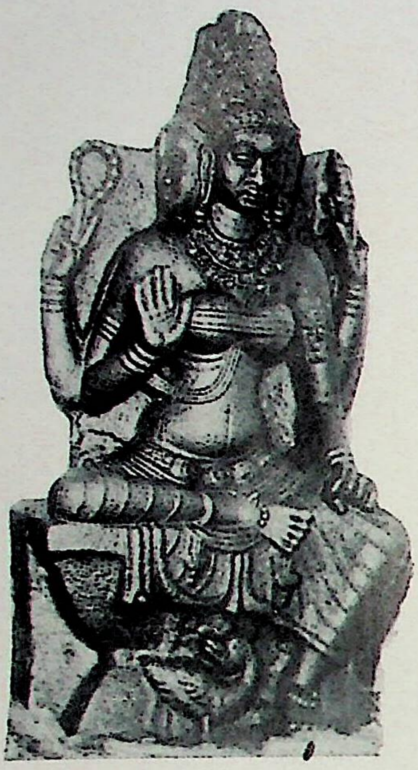
23. Jyashta devi on the north wall of the main shrine, Kailasanatha temple, Kanchi.



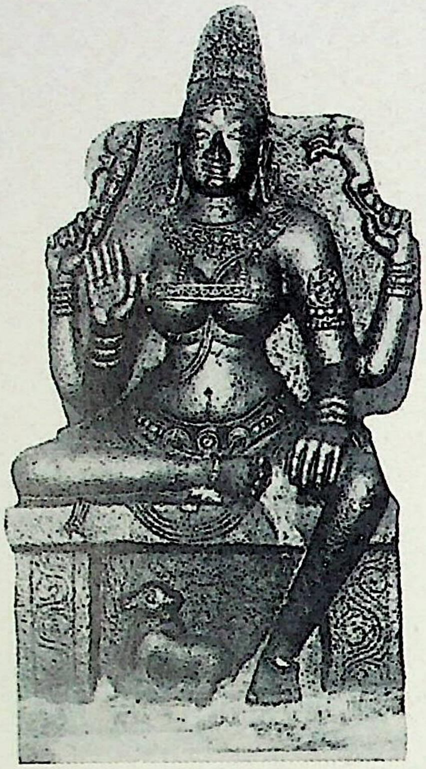
24. Vakdevi, Sundaravarada Perumal temple, Uttaramerur, Pallava-8th cent. A.D.



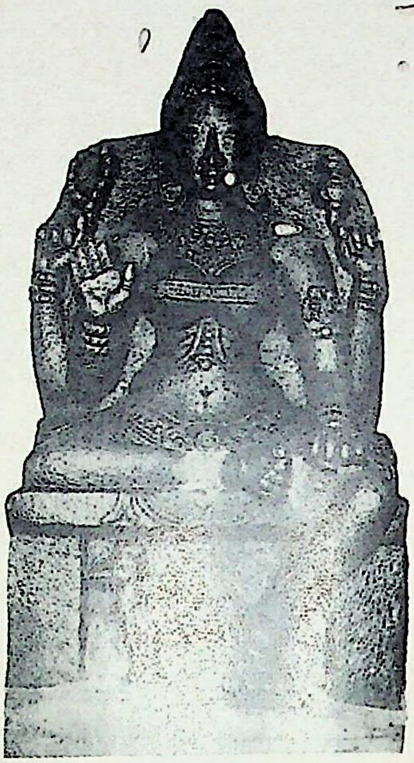
25. Durga in the *Devakoshta* of the Sive temple, Takkolam, of the age of Aparajita Pallava 9th cent. A.D.



26. Brahmi

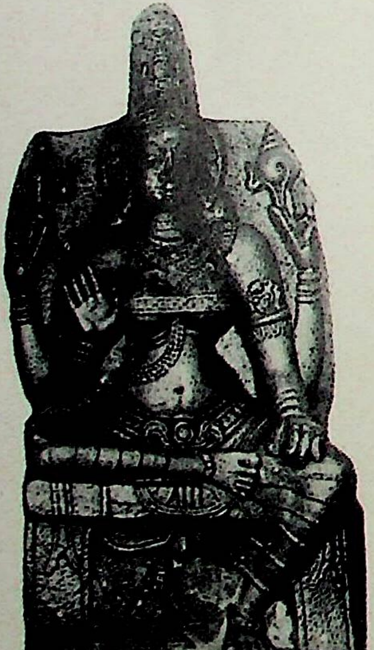


27. Mahesvari

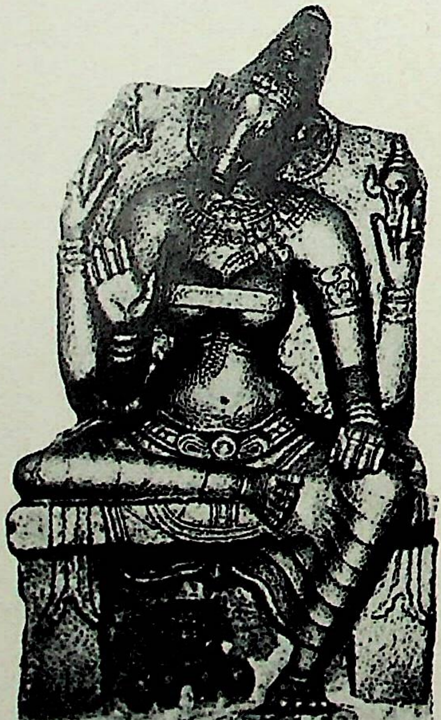


28. Kaumari

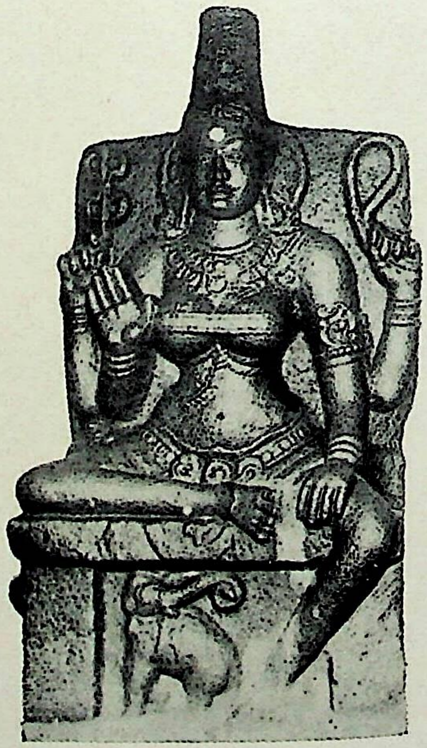
The seven mothers (Saptamatas) in the Virattanesvara temple
of Thiruttani, of the age of Aparajita Pallava-9th cent. A.D.



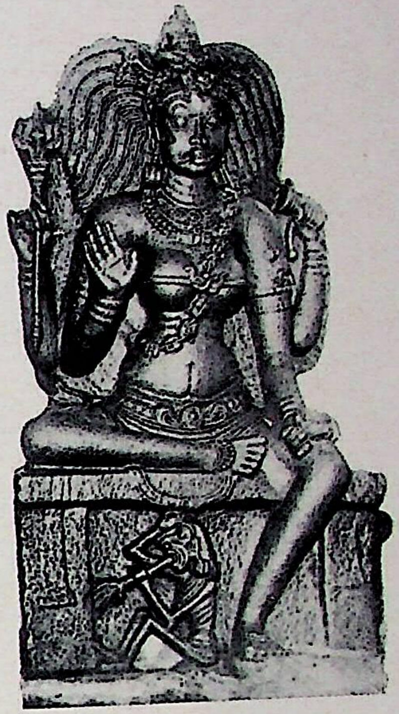
29. Vaishnavi



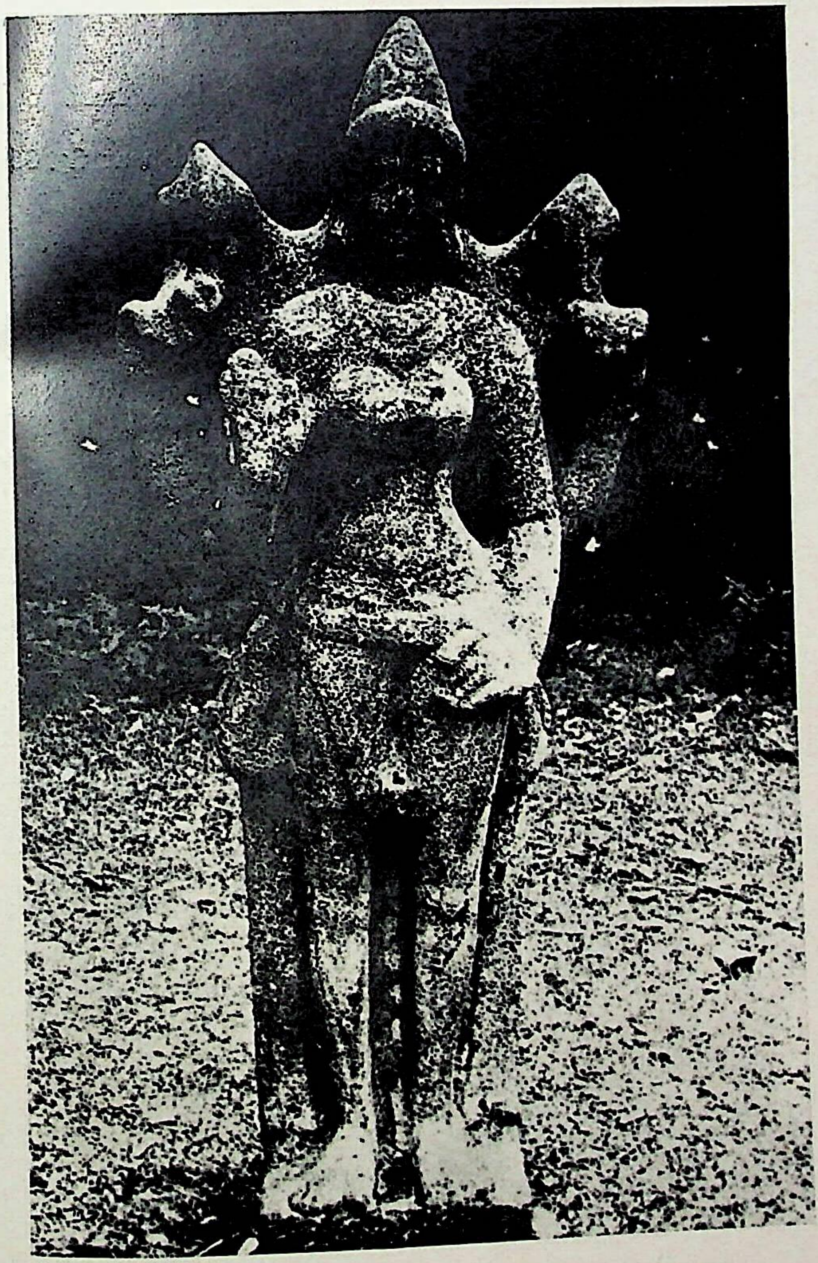
30. Varahi



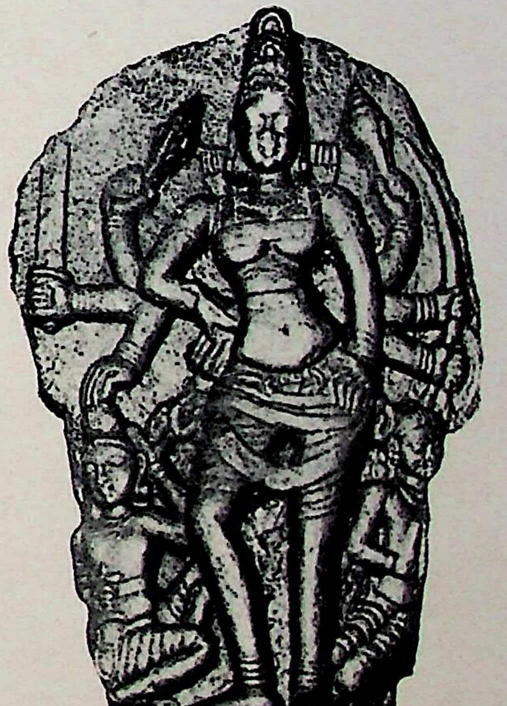
31. Indrani



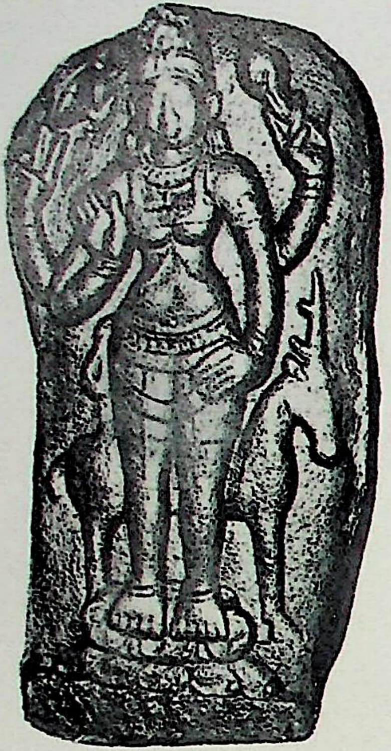
32. Camunda



33. Durga in Mangadu village near Madras, Pallava-
8th cent. A.D.



34. Eight-armed Durga in the Ranganatha
temple, Thiruvarangam.



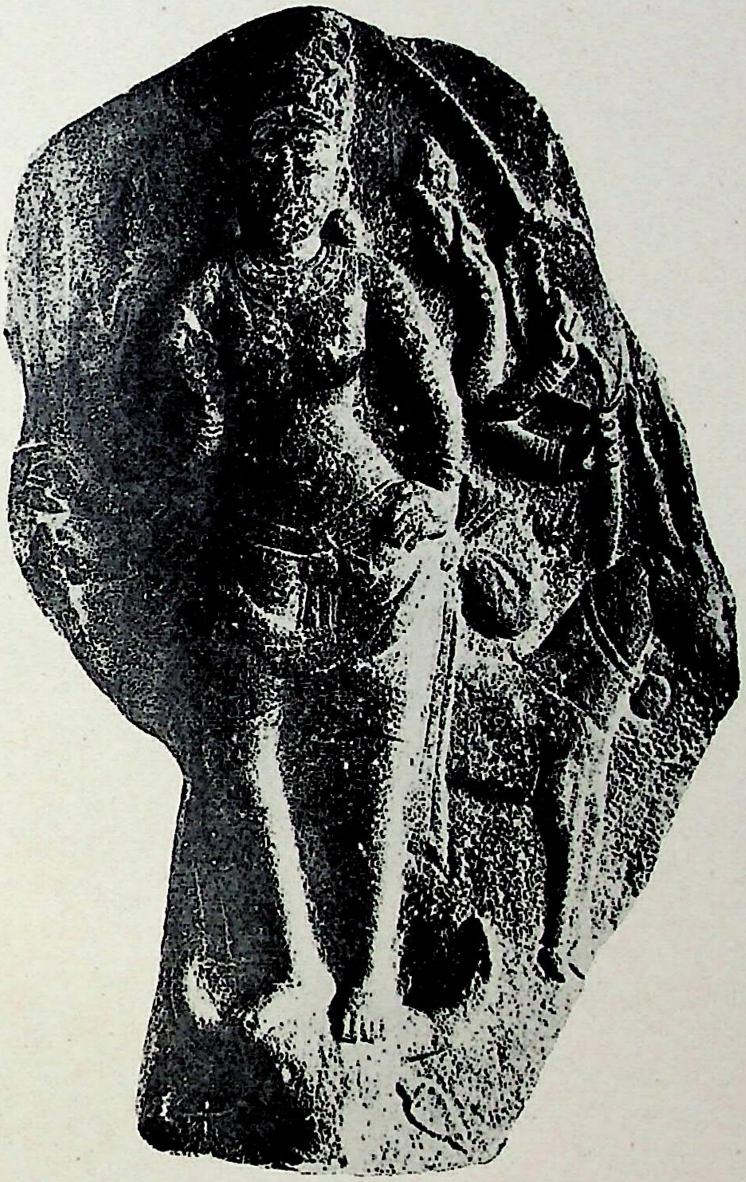
35. Durga, four-armed, standing on a lotus by the side of her mount deer, Pallava, 9th cent. A.D.

36. Eight-armed Durga standing on the head of a Mahisha, Parangiyur, 9th cent.

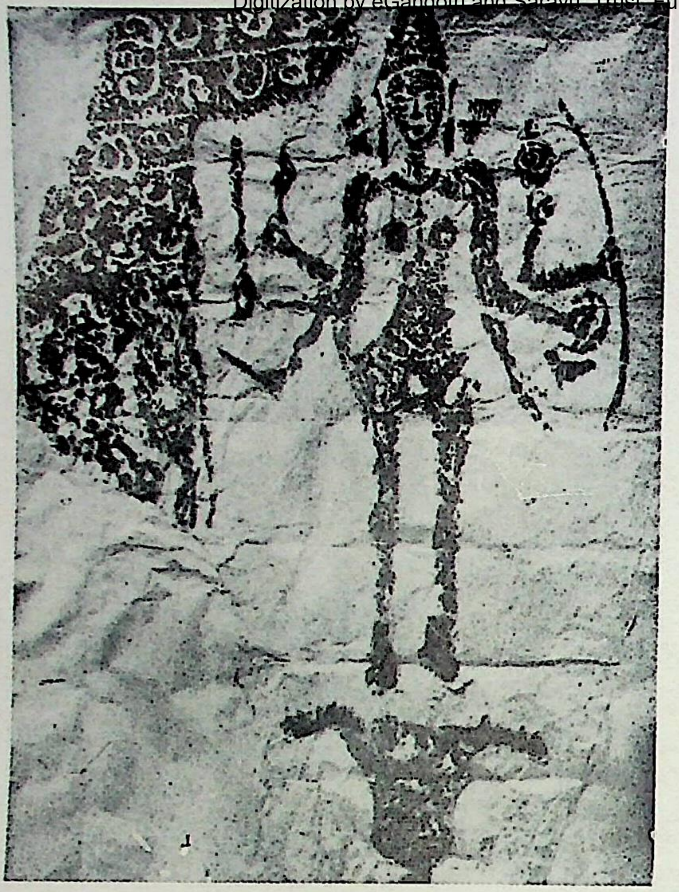
37. A *yogini* found near fig. 36 Porangiyur.

39. Durga, Periyamarai Tiruchchi district, Pallava, 8th cent. A.D.

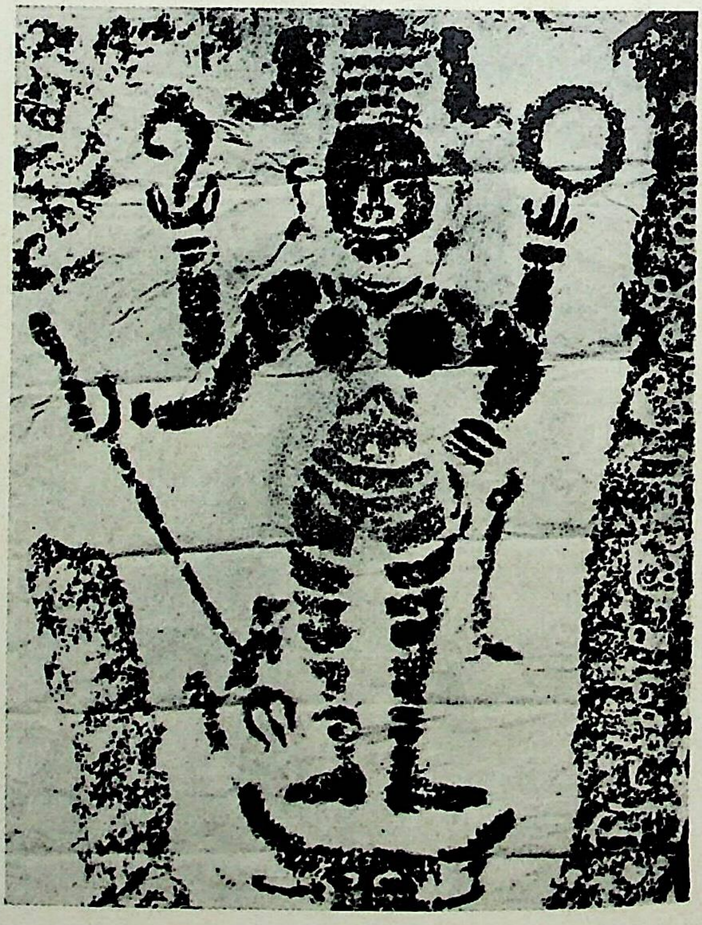
38. Durga, Vallam, Pallava, 8th cent. A.D.



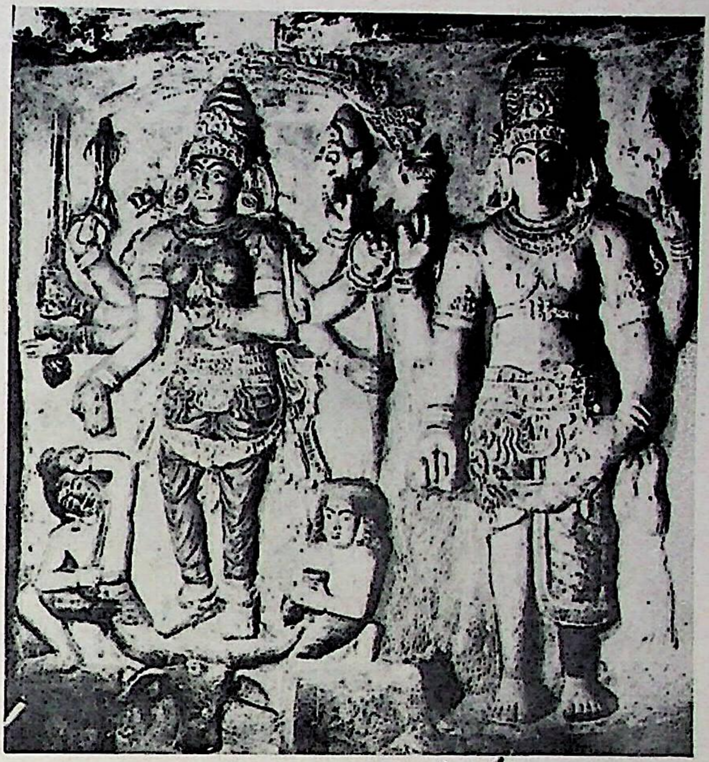
40. Durga on the buffaloe head. Standing by the side of her is her mount deer, now in the Madras Museum, 9th cent. A.D.



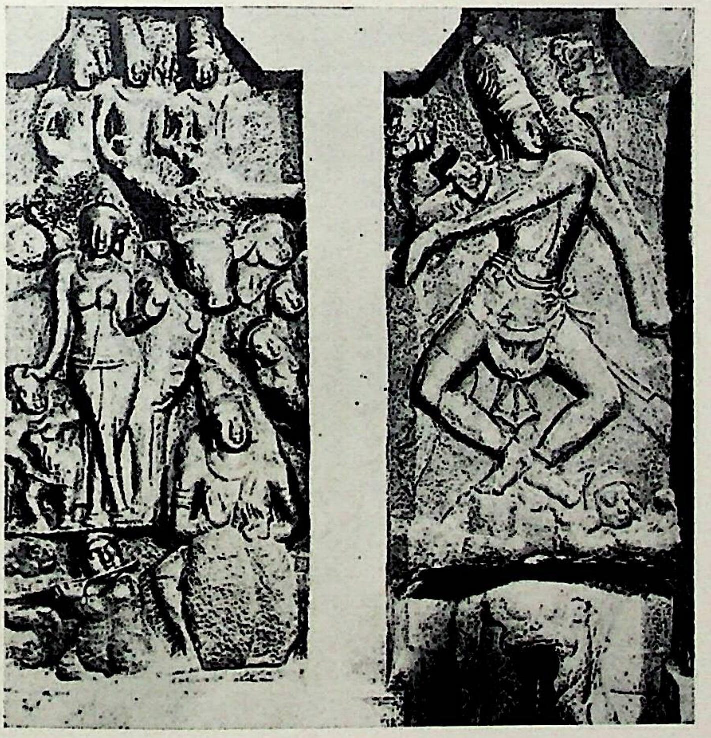
41. A paper impression of an eight-armed Durga standing with an inscription in 8th cent. Vatteluttu characters giving the name of the Goddess as Baghavati, Kurucculi on Tirthamalai, Dharmapuri district.



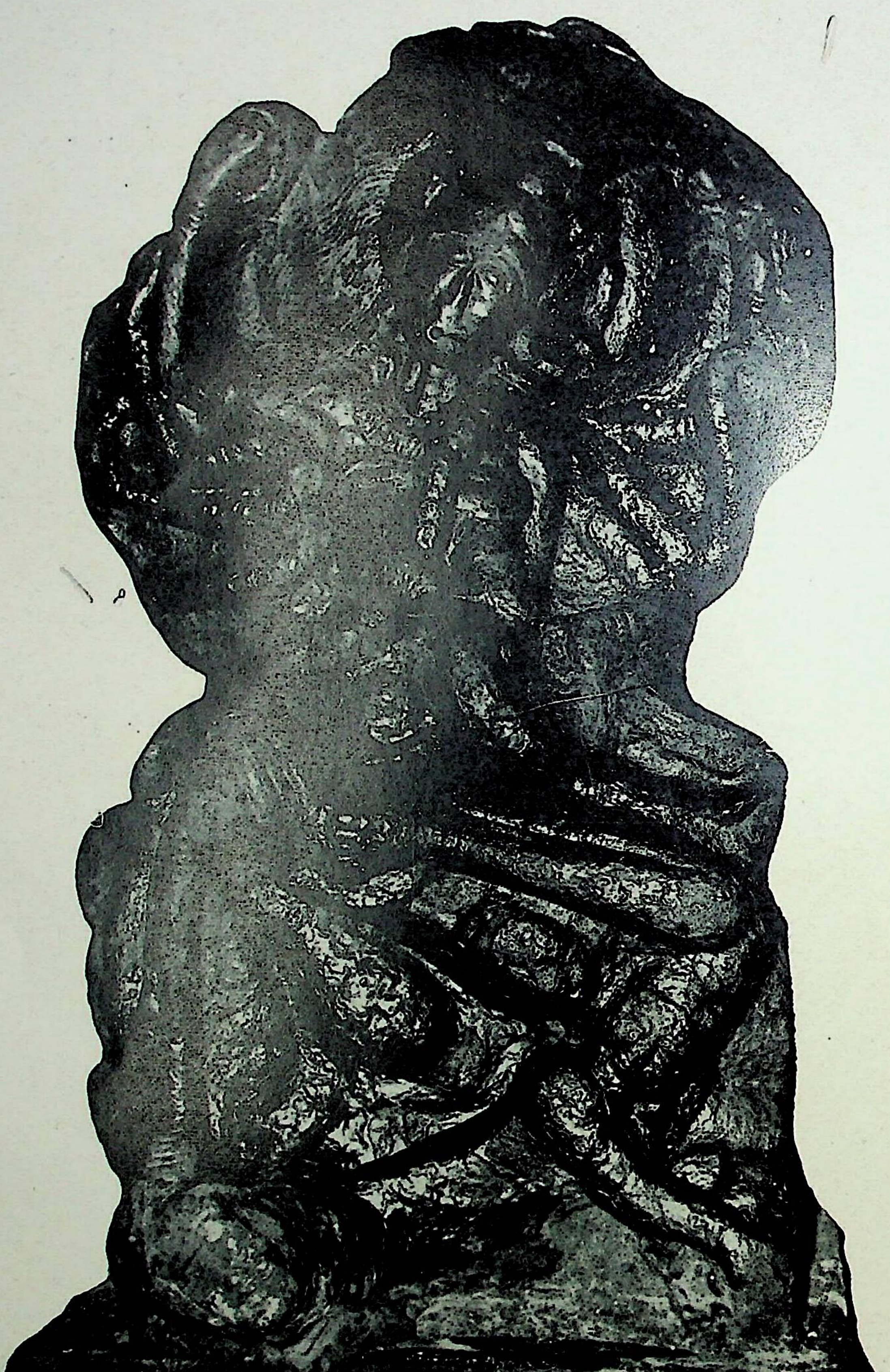
42. Another paper impression of Durga with an inscription in Tamil of 11th cent. A D.



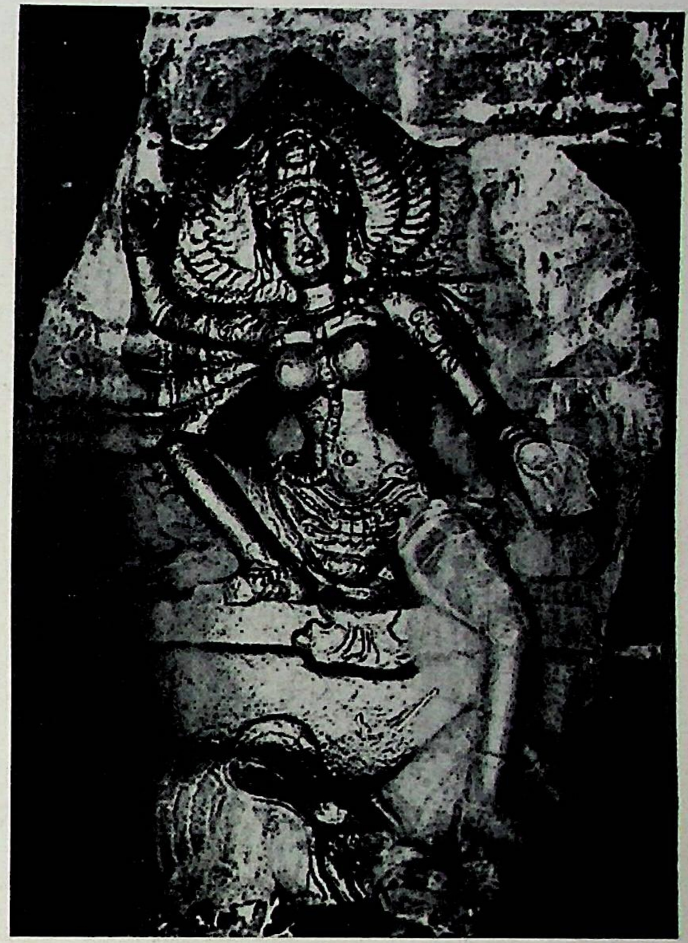
43. Durga and Vishnu in an excavated cave at Kunnakkudi, Pandya-8th cent. A.D.



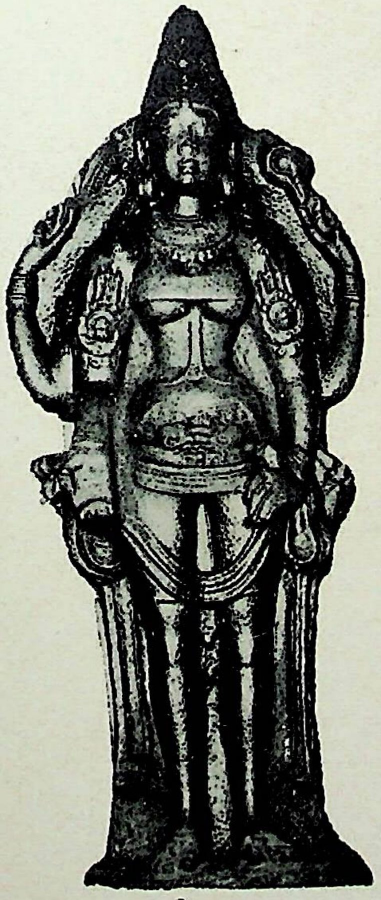
44. Siva dancing on Muyalaka and Parvati standing by the side witnessing the dance. A part of the panel showing Saptamatas dancing is blocked by later walling, Thirupparankunram, Pandya, 8th cent. A.D.



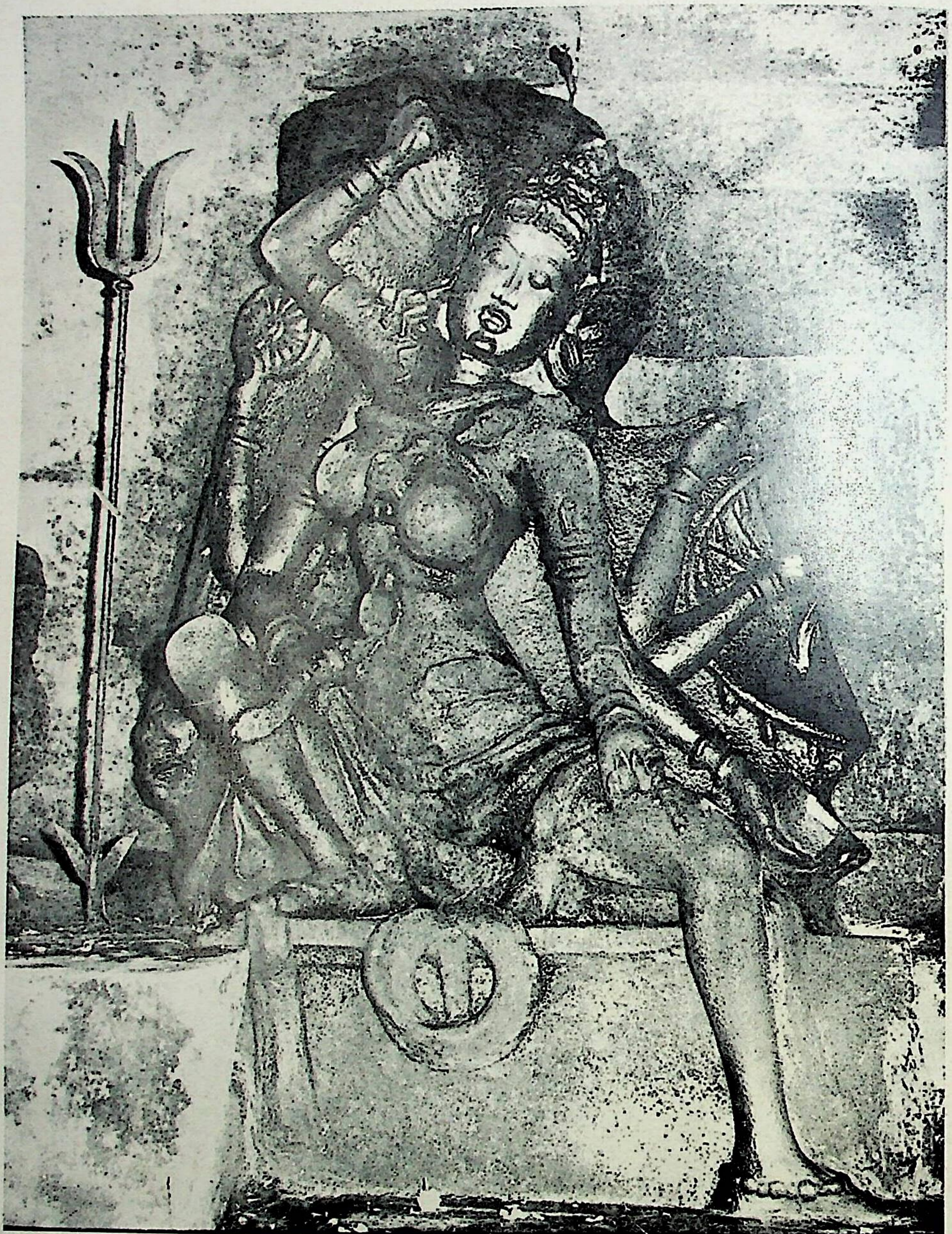
45. Tne Goddess Nisumbasudani, set up at Thanjavur by Vijayalaya Chola, 9th cent. A.D.



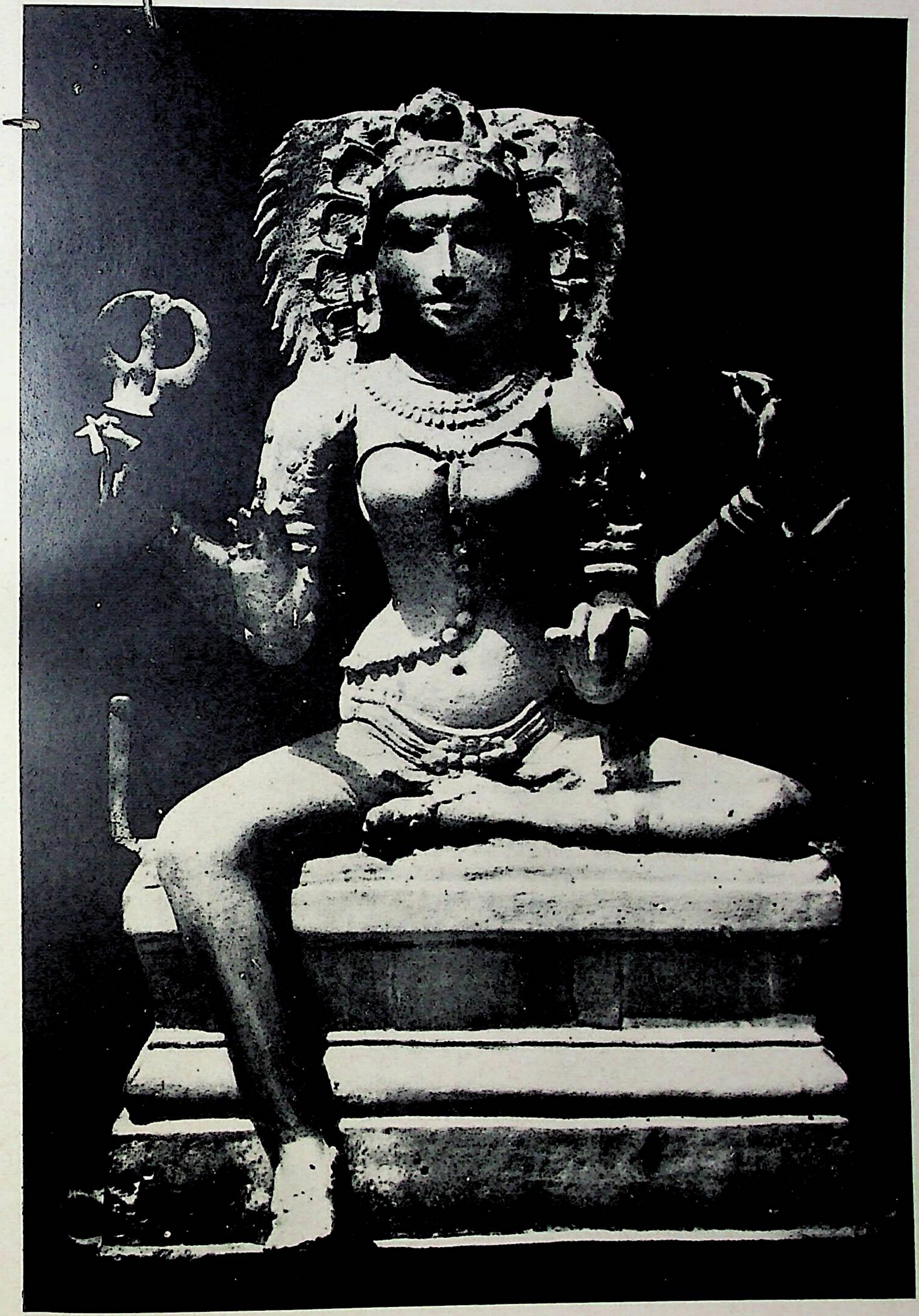
46. Kali set up at Kilaiyur by a Paluvettarayar chieftain. Early Chola, 9th cent.



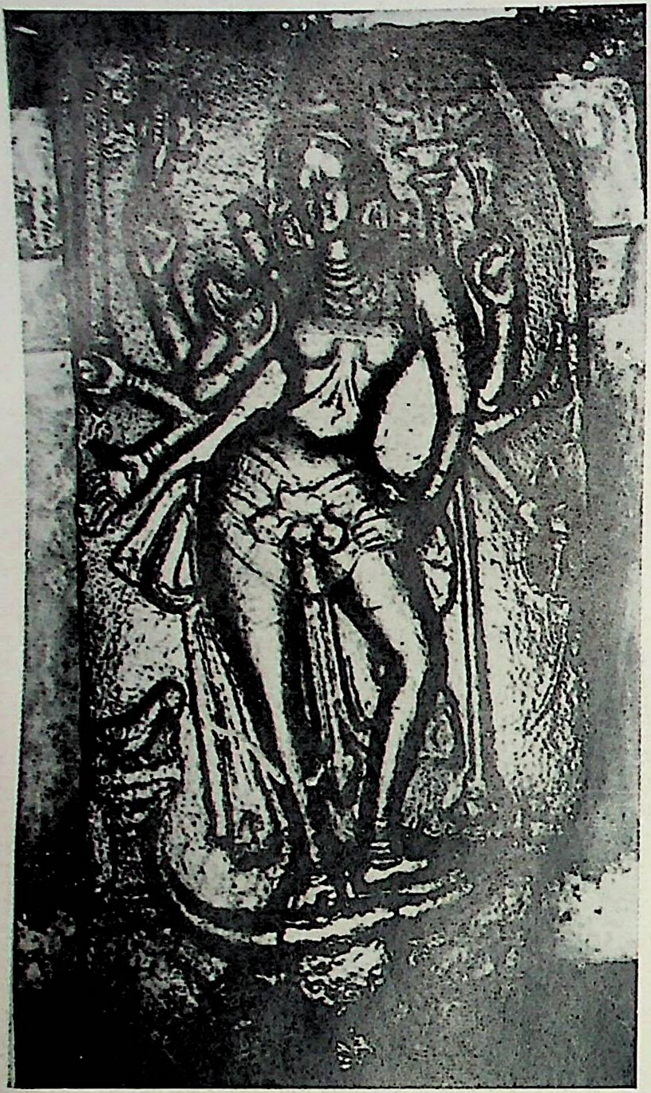
49. Durga stone, Kandiyur, Thanjavur District, 9th cent. A.D.



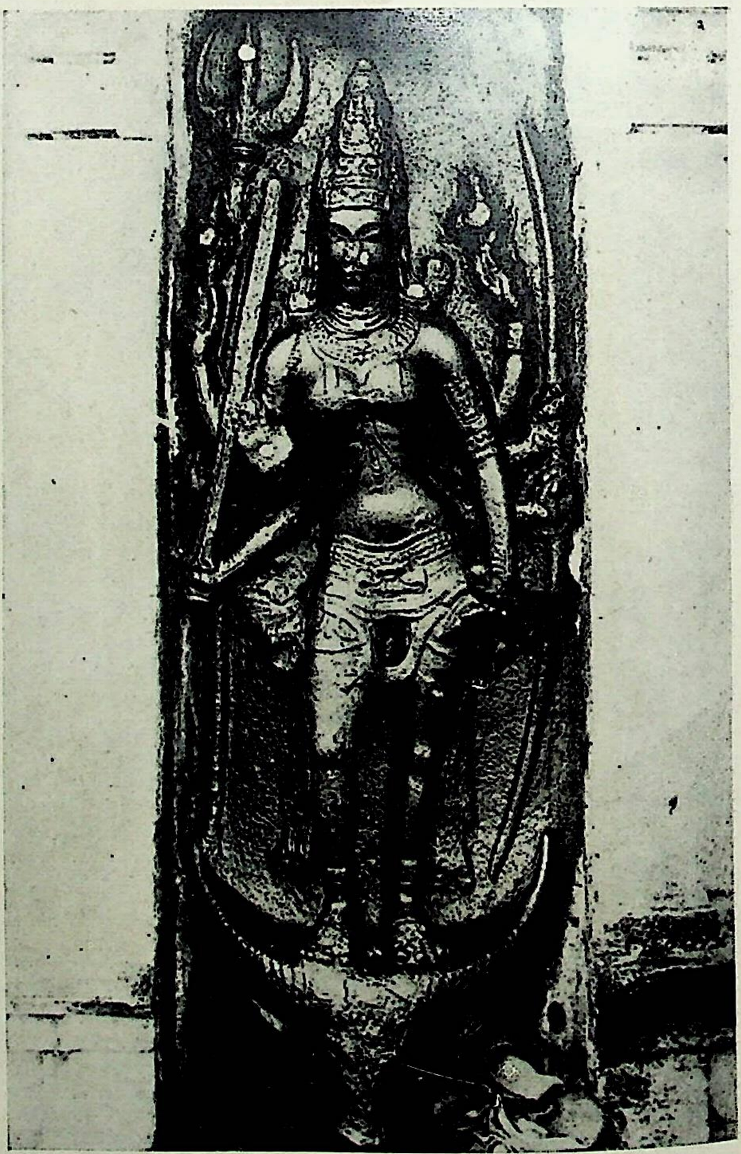
47. Goddess Kali of improsing beauty and elegance, Thiruvakkarai, of the age of Vijayalaya Chola, 9th cent. A.D.



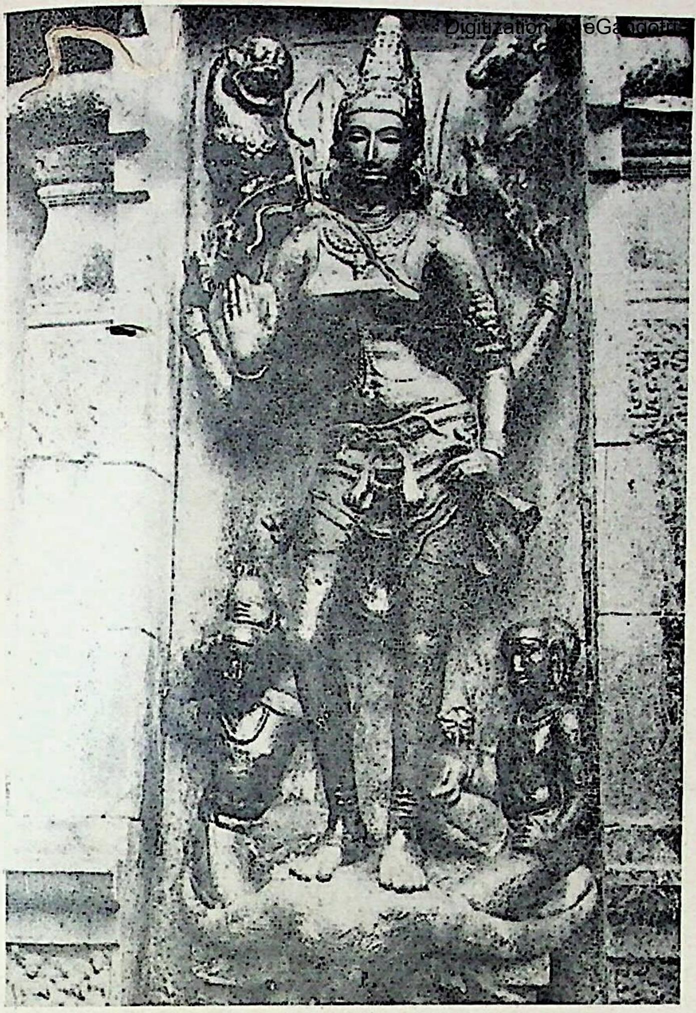
48. A bronze image of Goddess Kali, Kilaiyur, Thanjavur district, of the age Vijayalaya Chola, 9th cent. A.D.



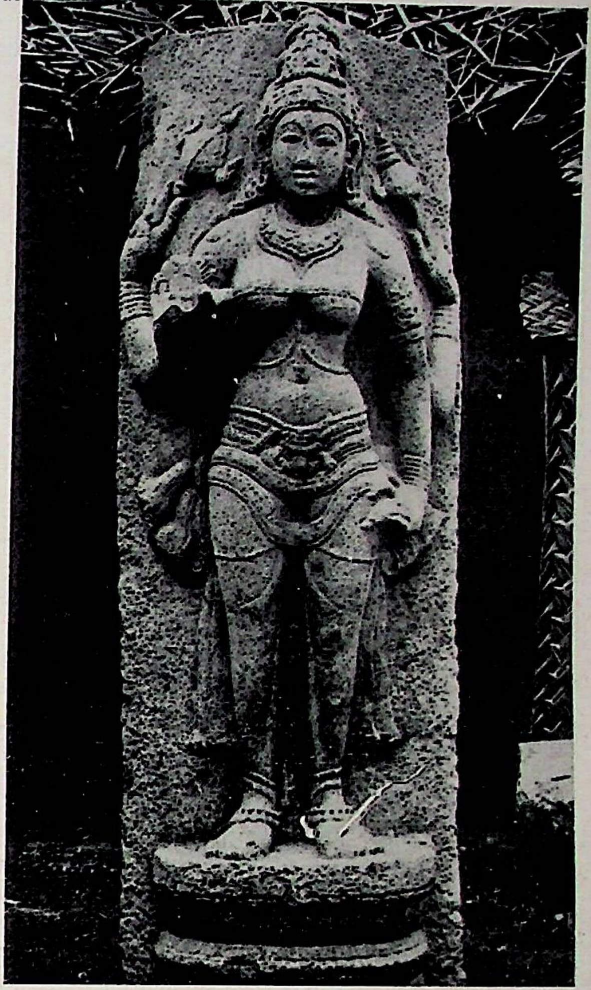
50. Durga, stone, Thyagaraya temple, Thiruvarur, Thanjavur, Early Chola, 9th cent. A.D.



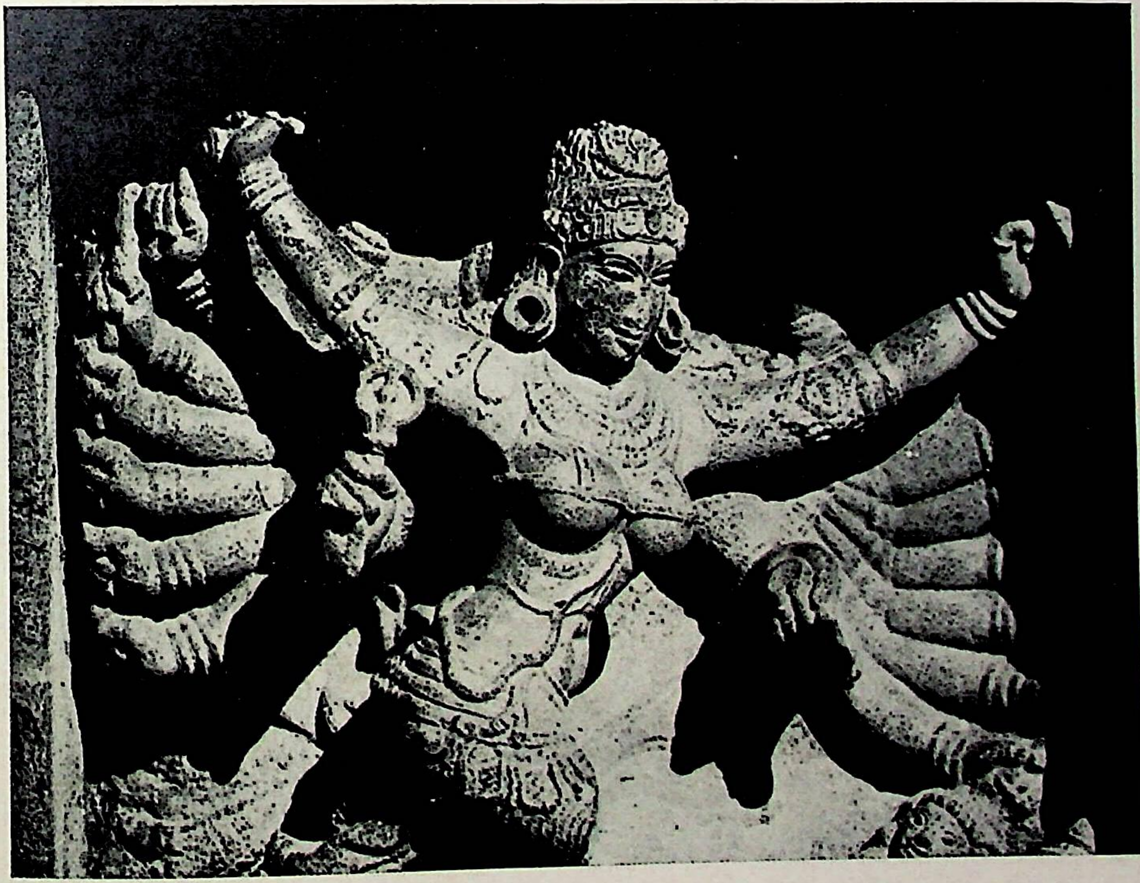
51. Durga, stone, Thyagaraja temple, Thanjavur, Early Chola, 10th cent.



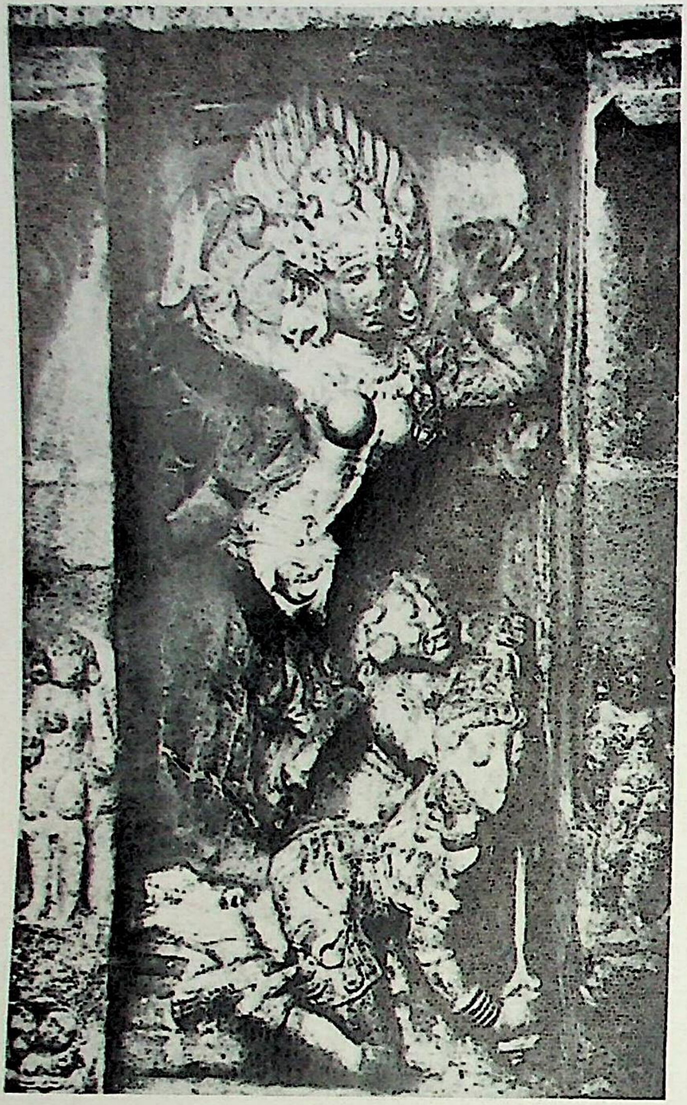
52. Durga, stone, Siva temple, Punjai, Chola, 10th cent. A.D.



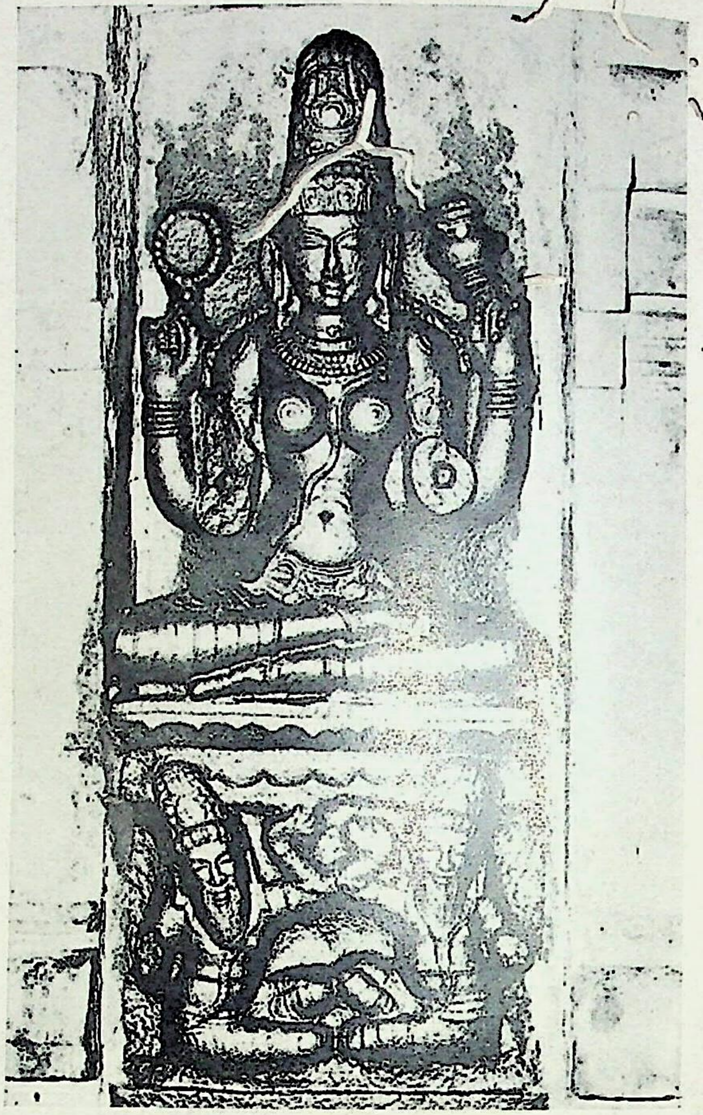
53. Durga, stone, Amalisvaram temple, Thiruchidistrict, Chola, 10th cent. A.D.



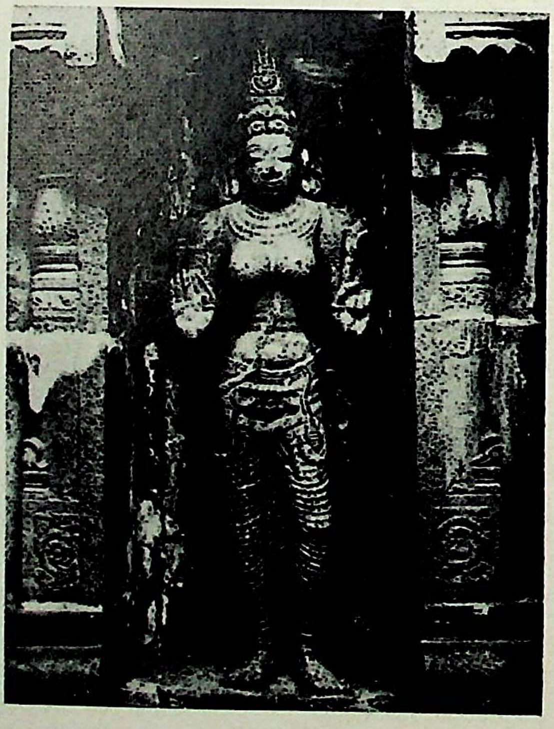
54, Tripurasundari Durga, stone in the East Gopura, Chidambaram, Later Chola, 12th cent. A.D.



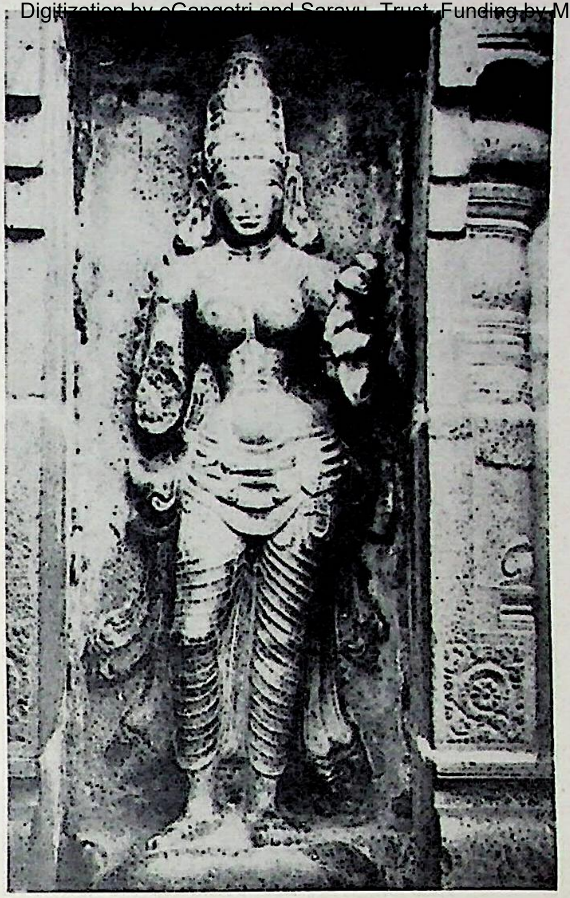
55. Bhadrakali in the West Gopura, Chidambaram, Later Chola, 12th cent. A.D.



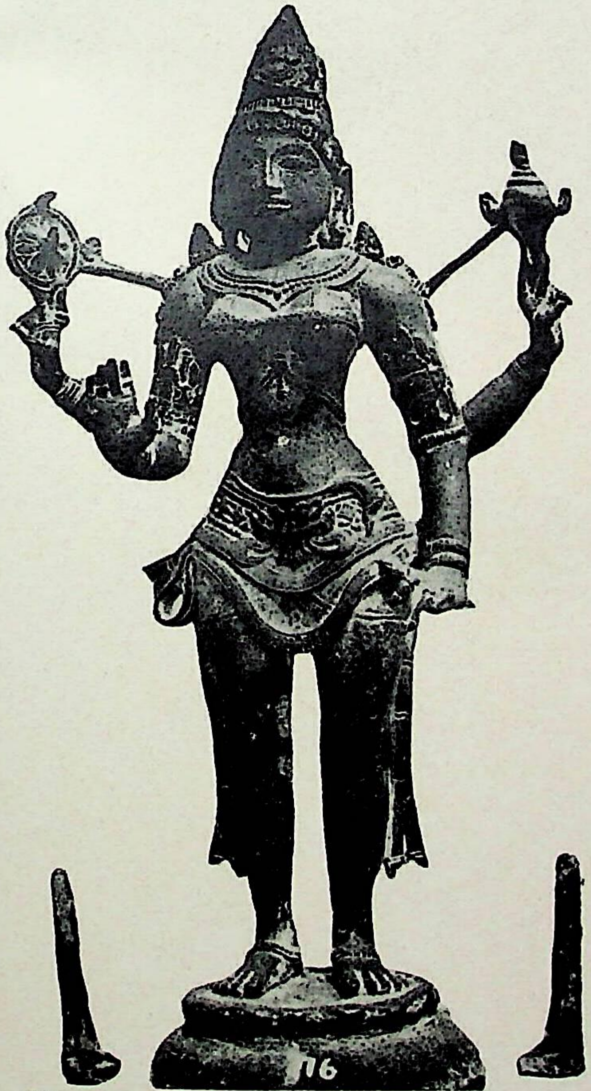
56. Sarasvati in the Gopura, Chidambaram, Later Chola, 12th cent. A.D.



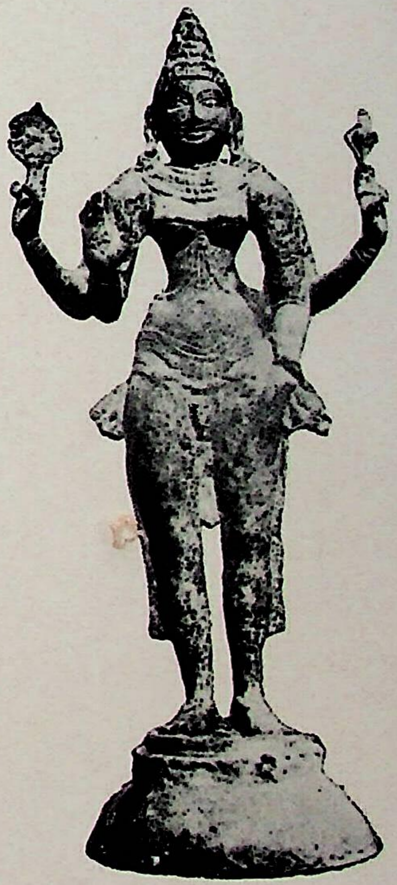
57. Goddess Ganga in the East Gopura, Chidambaram, Later Chola, 12th cent. A.D.



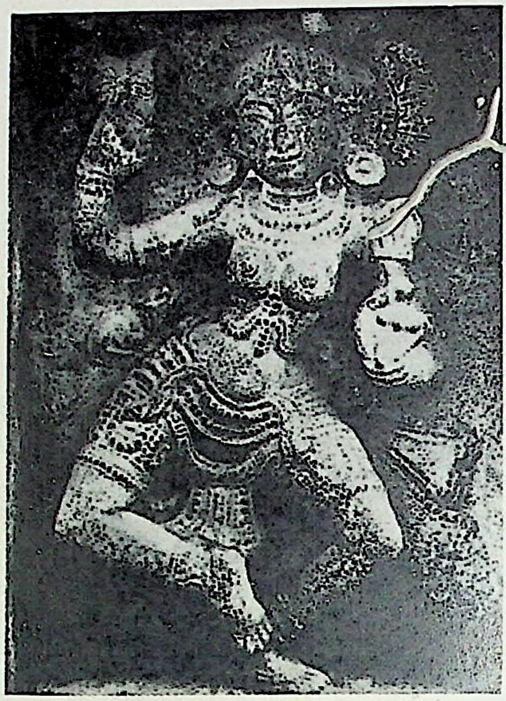
58. Yamuna, stone, in the eastern Gopura, chidambaram, Later Chola, 12th cent.



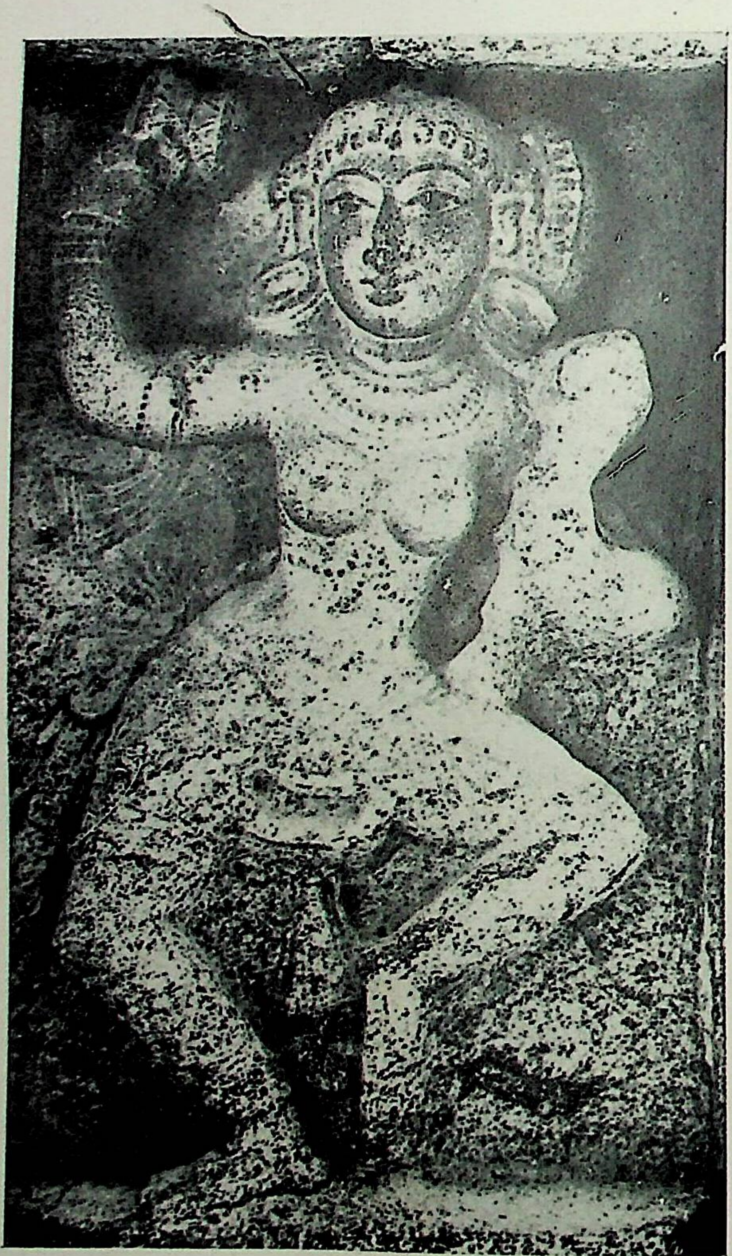
59. **Durga, Bronze, Chola, 11th cent. A.D. Tanjore Art Gallery.**

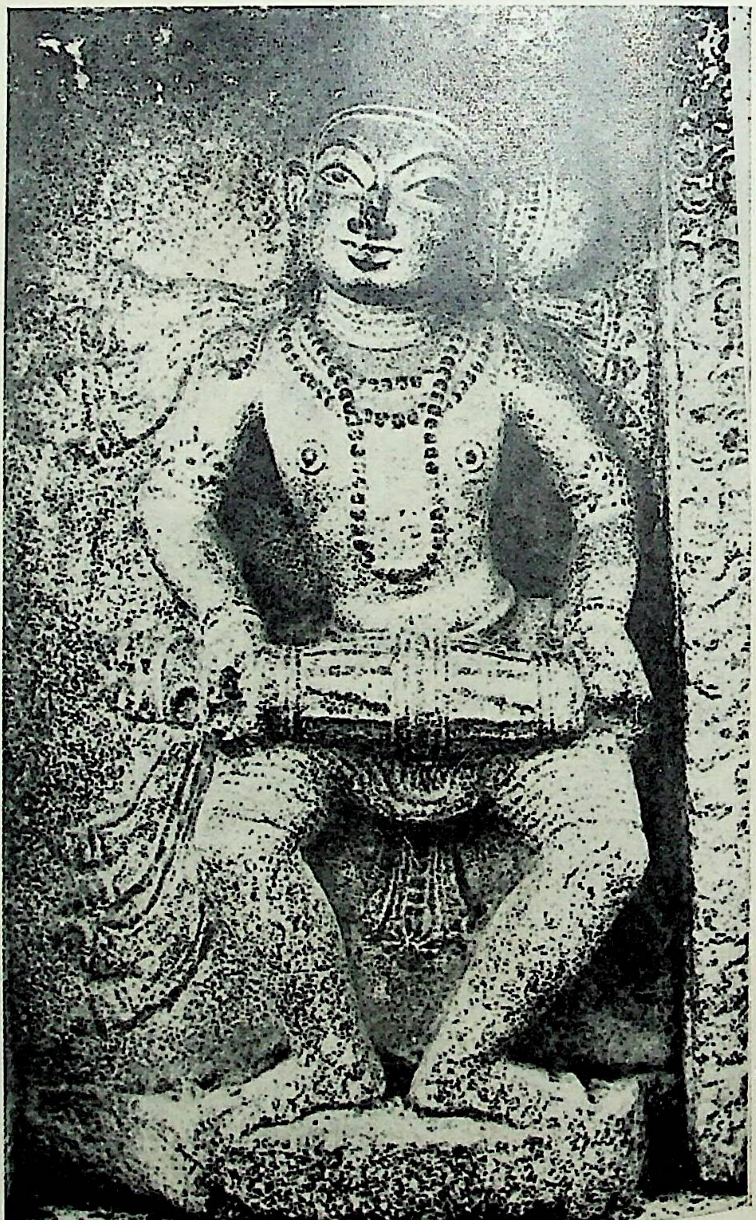


60. **Durga, Bronze, Dharmapuram mutt collection, Chola, 11th-12th cent. A.D.**

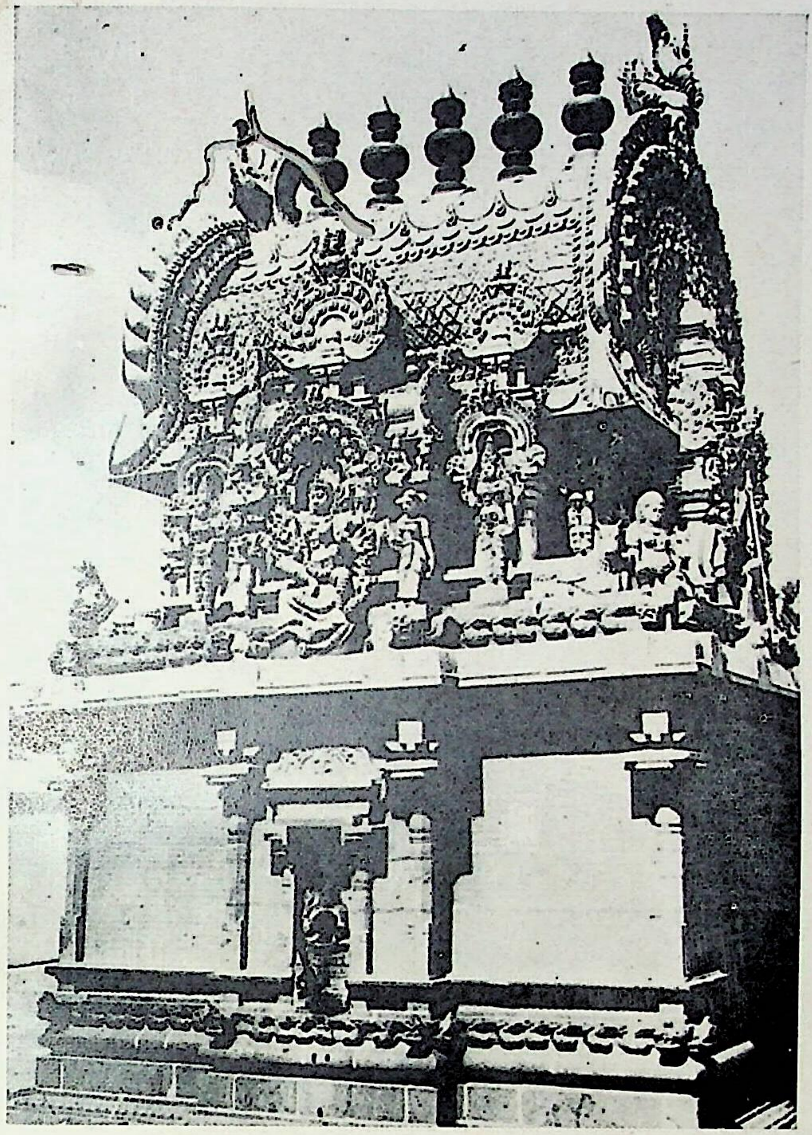


61. Dancing girl carying *damaru* and *sula*, found on the base of the *prakera* of Sivakami shrine, Chidambaram, Later Chola, 12th cent. A.D.

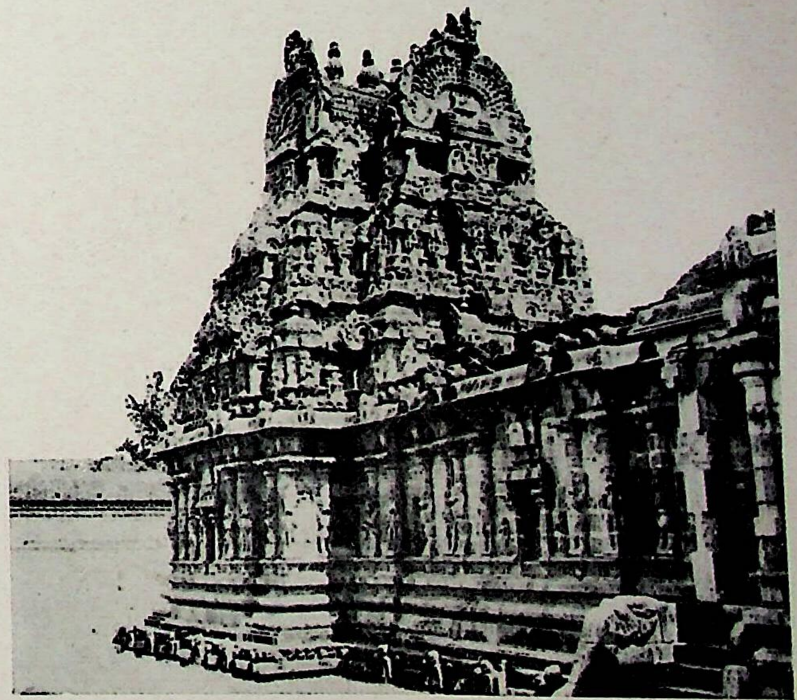




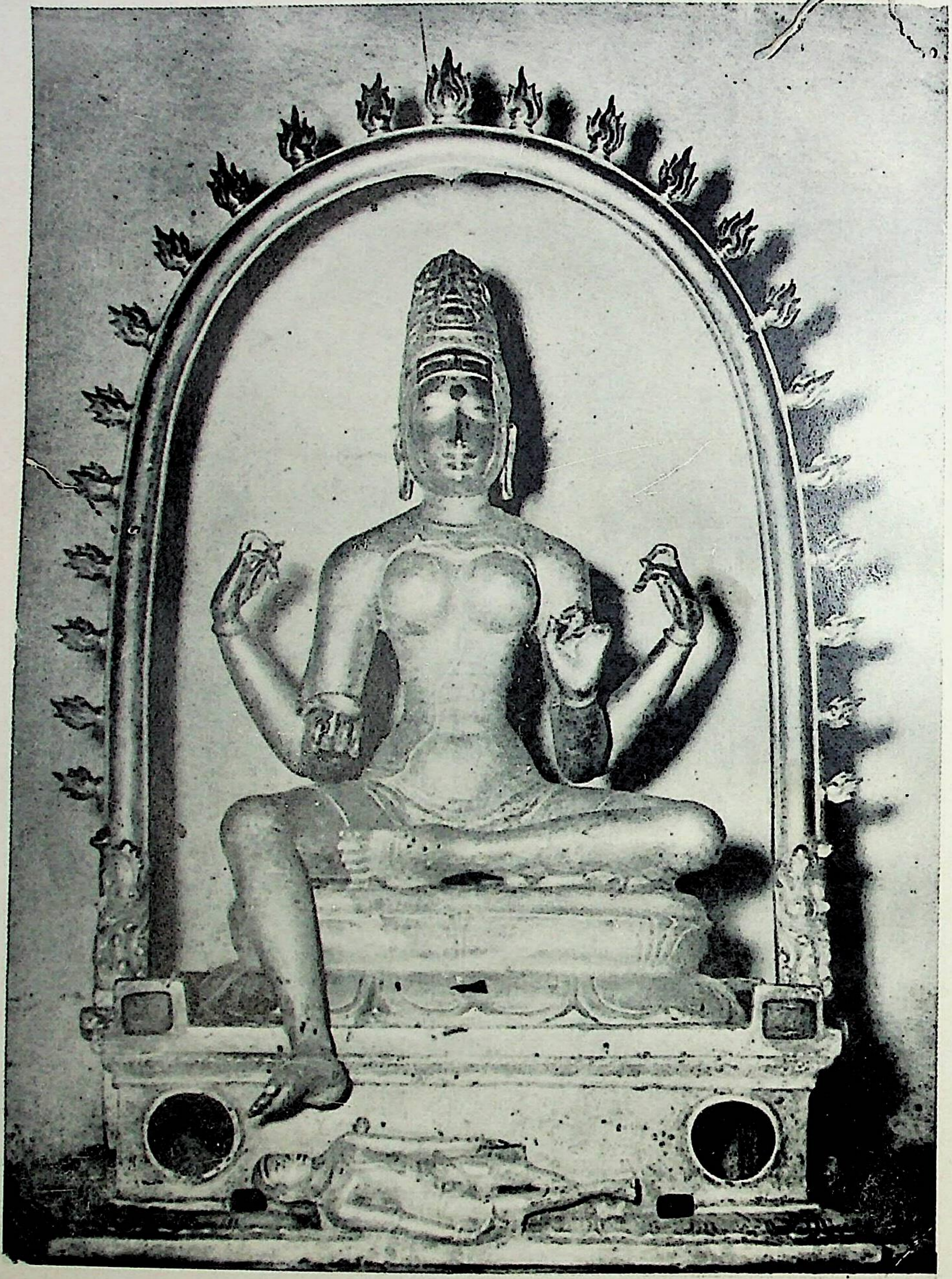
62-63. **Dancers, Chidambaram temple, Later Chola, 12th cent.**



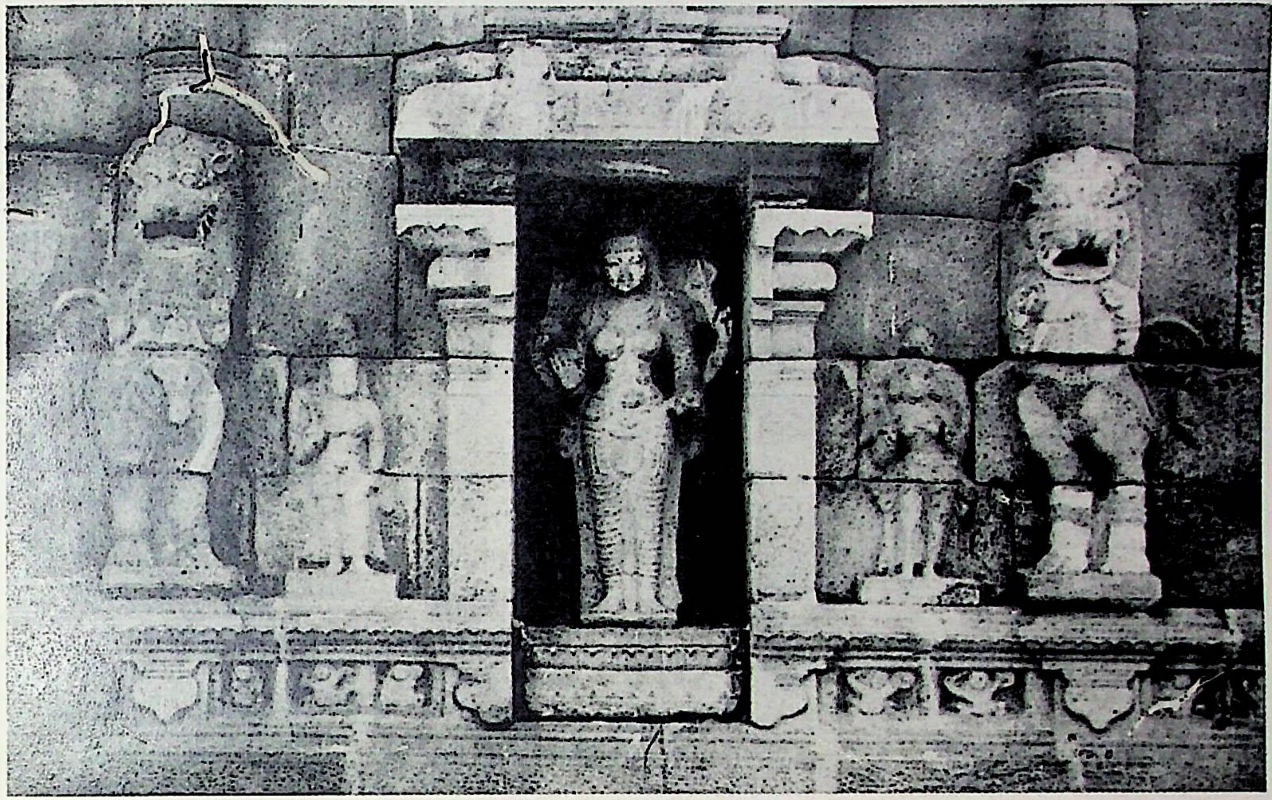
64. Tillaikkali temple, built by Kopperunjing, 13th cent. A.D.



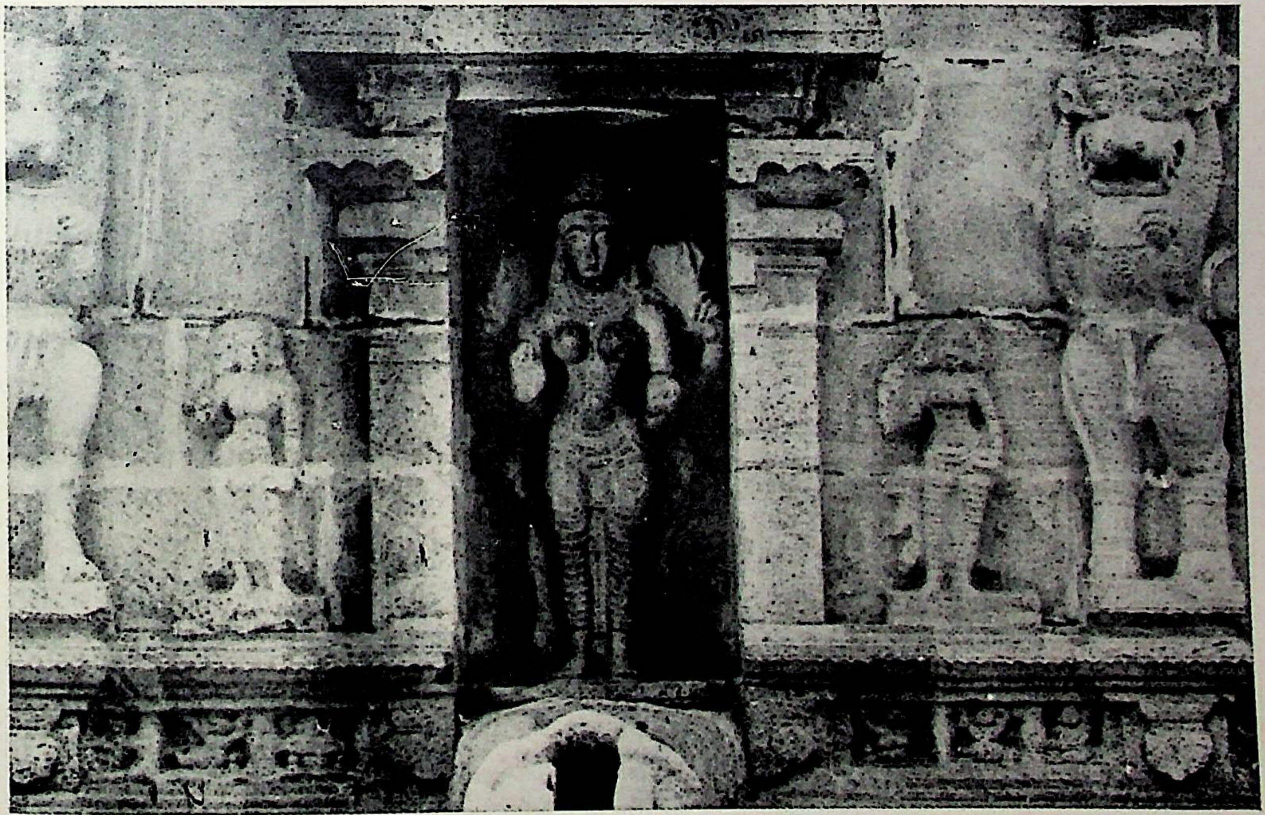
66. Amman shrine, built in the 13th cent., Darasuram.



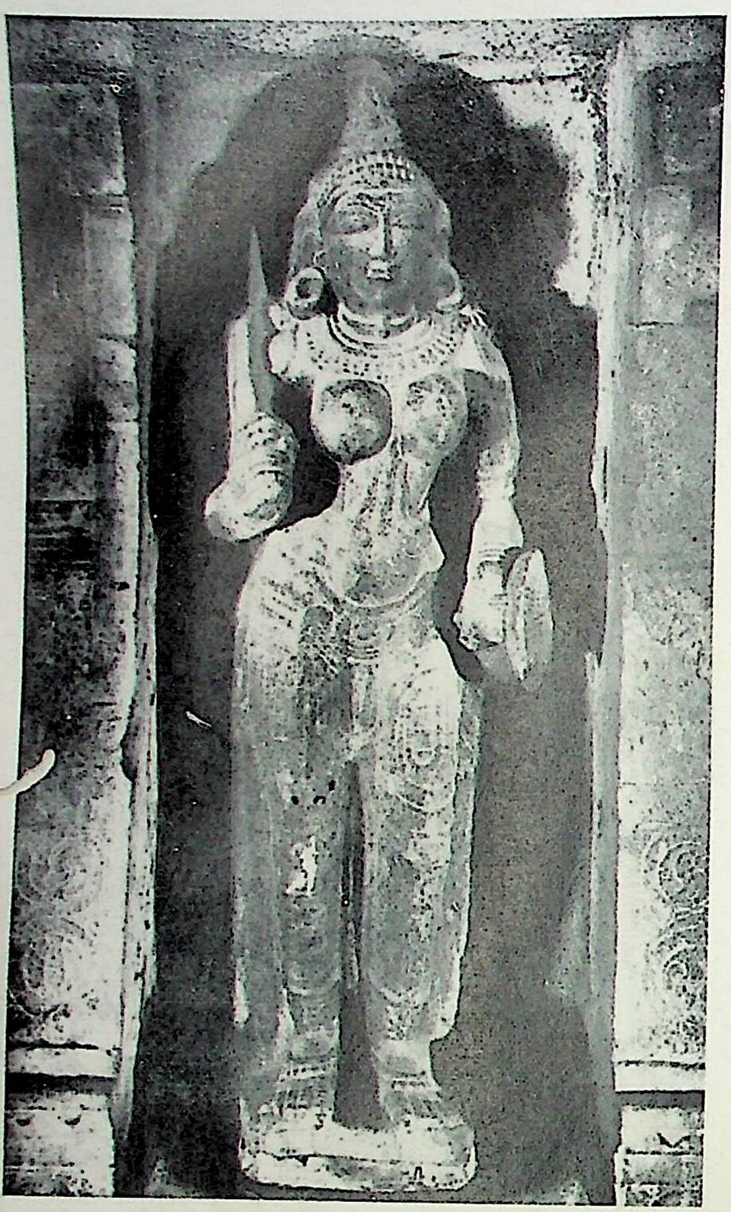
65. Tillaivanam udaiya Paramesvari, Bronze, Chola, 11th cent. Tillaikali temple, Chidambaram.



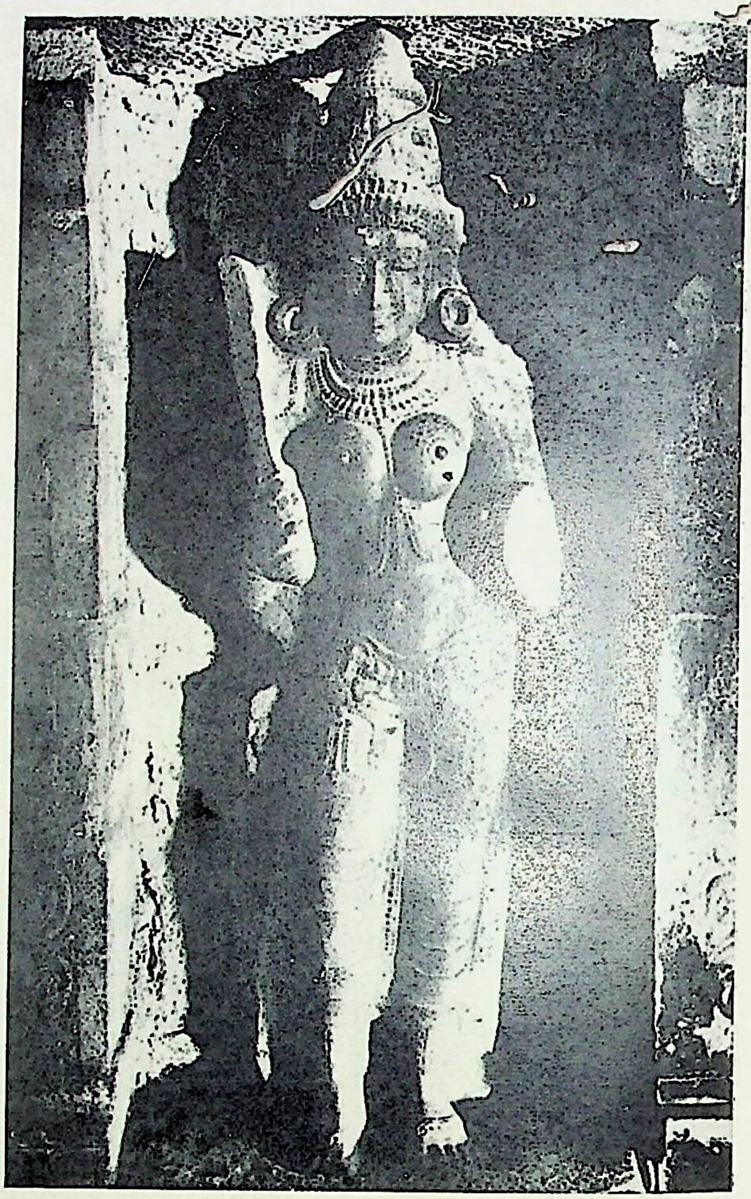
67. *Icca* Sakti in the *devakoshta* of the Amman shrine Darasuram, 13th cent. A.D.



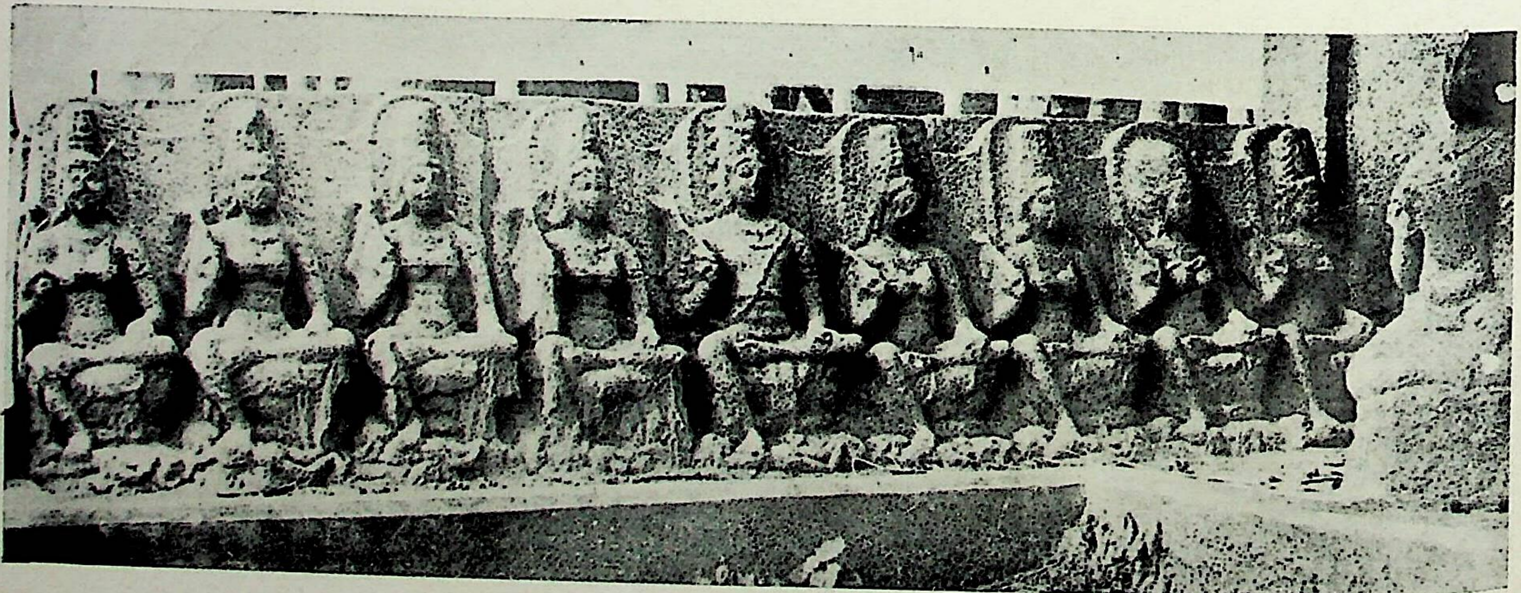
68. Jhana Sakti in the *devakoshta* of the Amman shrine, Darasuram.



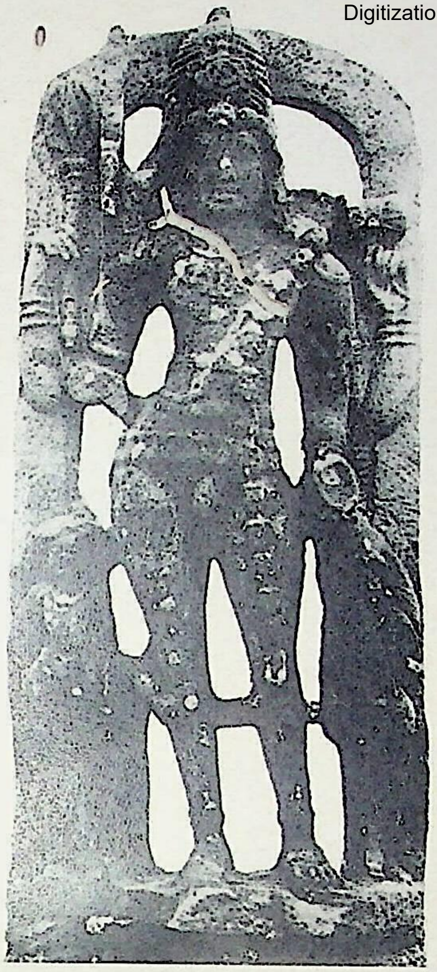
69. The dvarapalikas, Amman shrine.



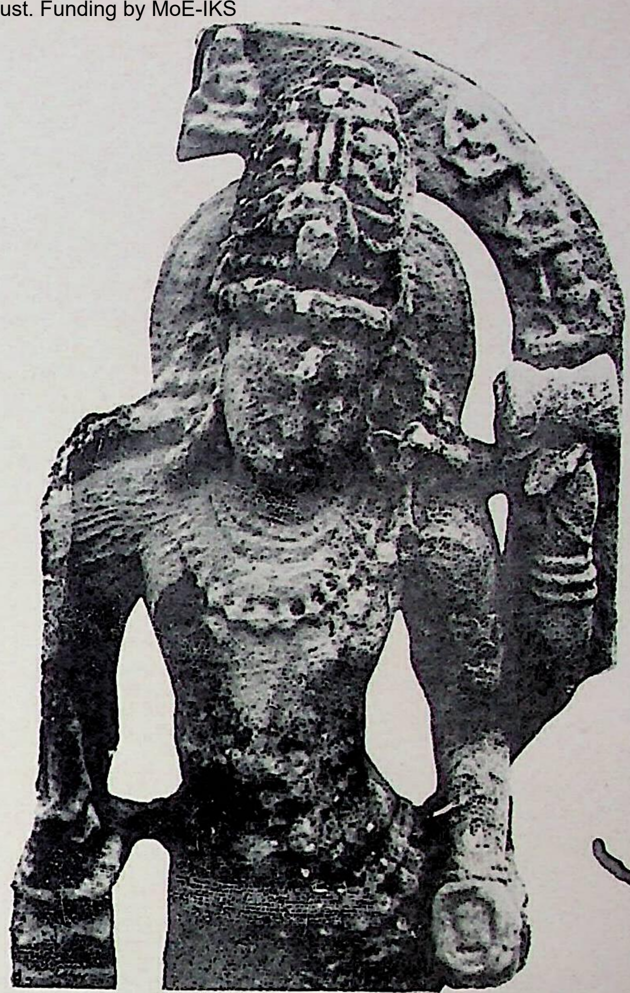
70. Jaya and Vijaya in Darasuram.



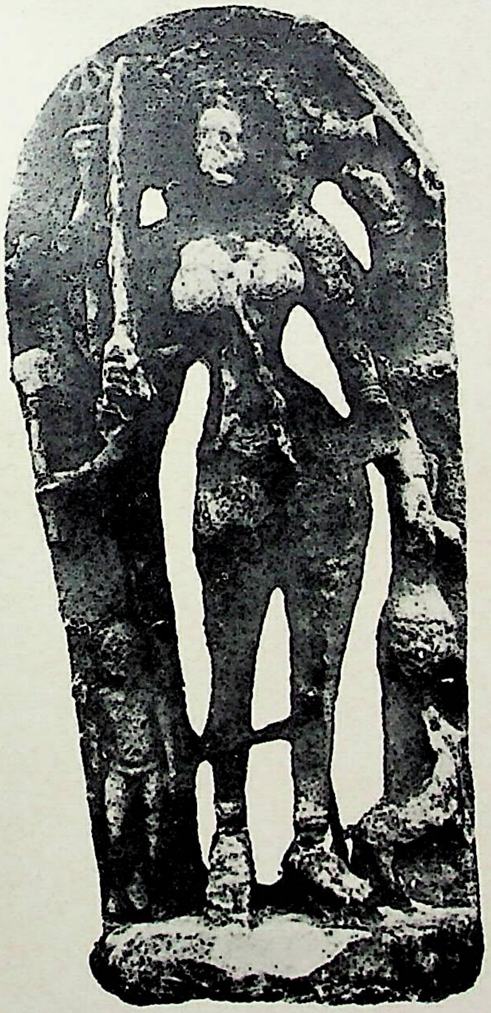
71. Ashtamata group-Thiruvaiyaru, Thanjavur Dist.



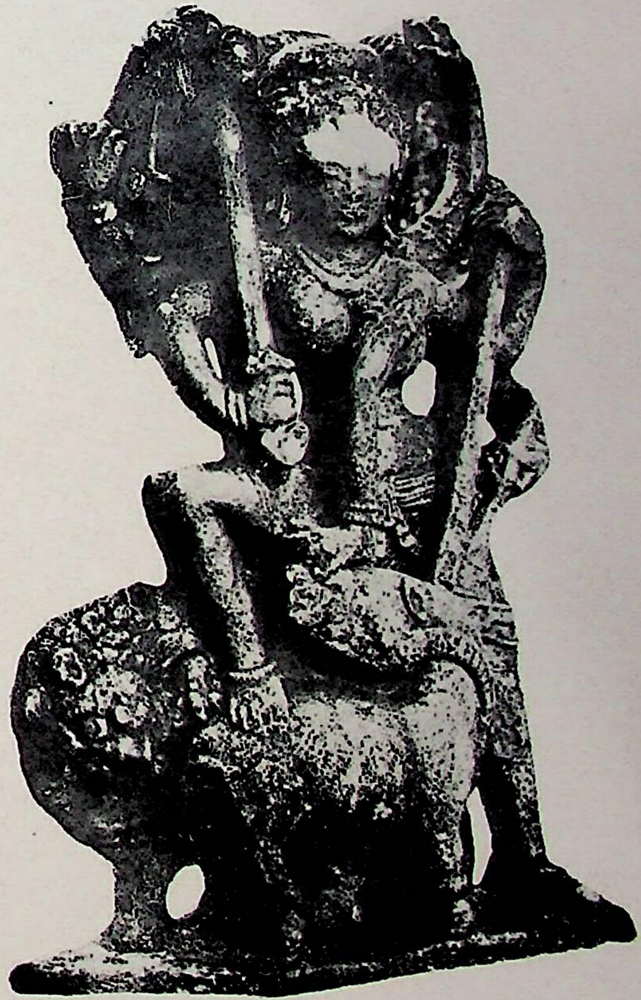
72. Bhairava from Kalinga. Now in Chengamedu Gangai Konda Cholapuram.



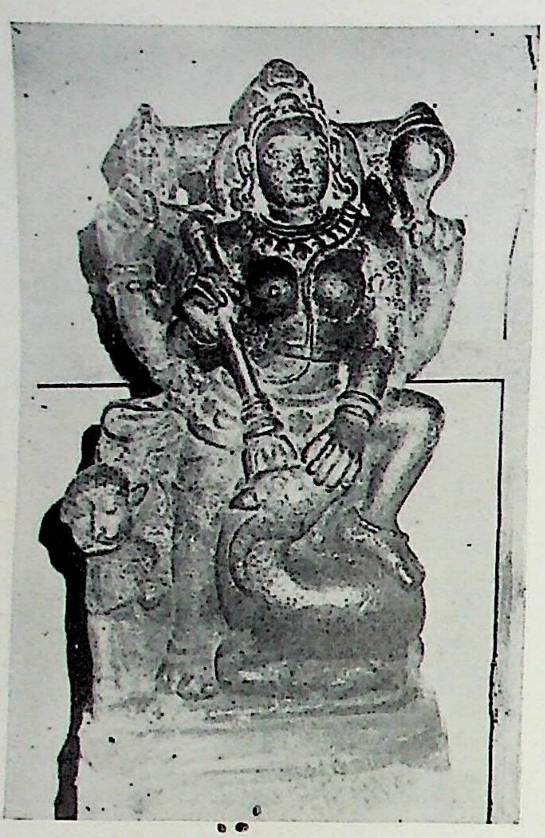
73. Bhairava from Kalinga, Gangai Konda Cholapuram.



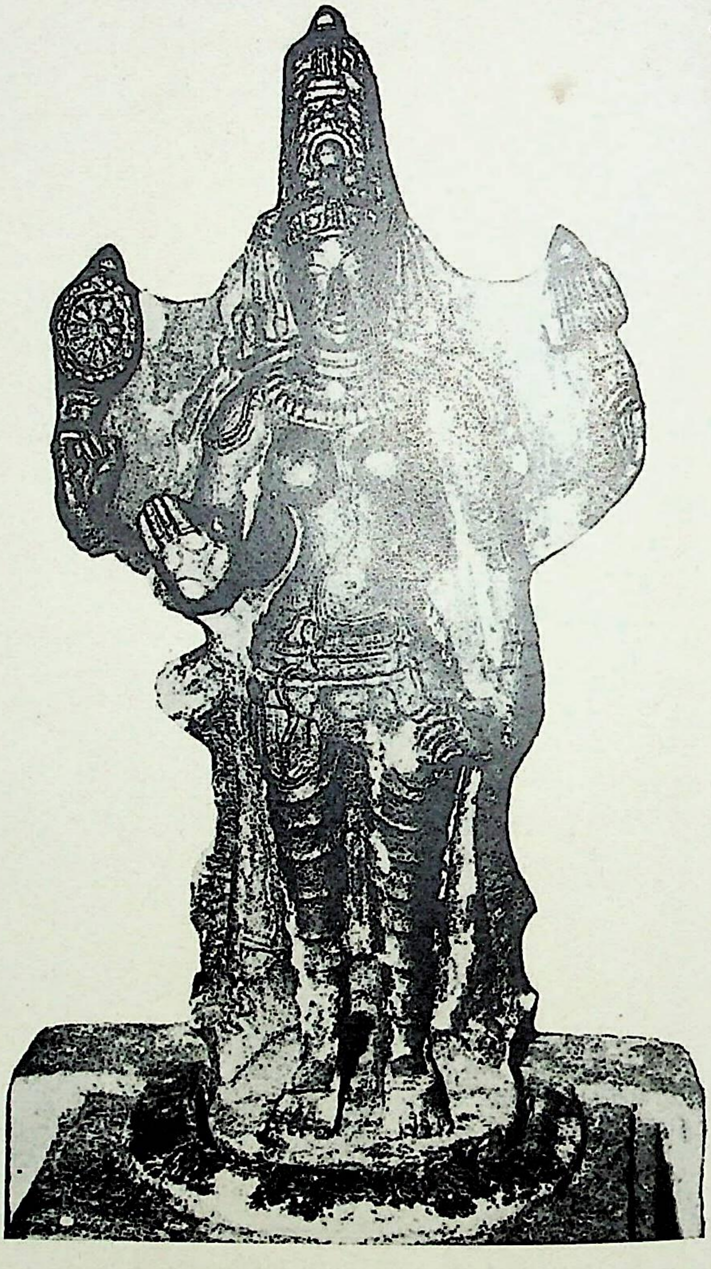
74. Bhairavi, Kalinga, now in Gangai Konda Cholapuram.



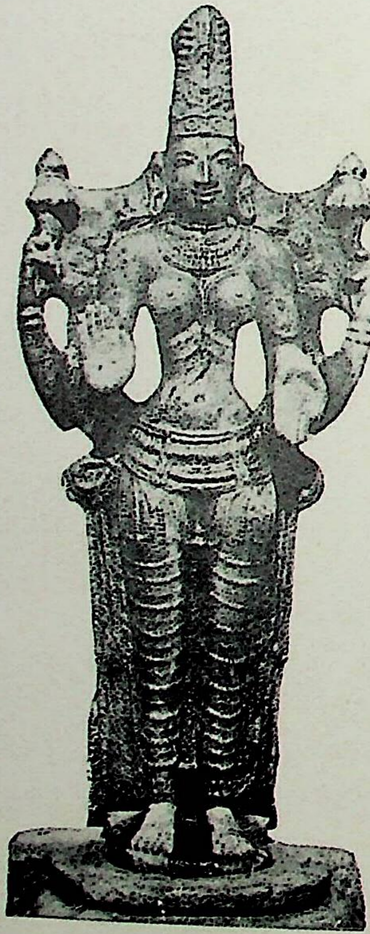
75. Durga, Nolamba, now in Gangai Konda Cholapuram.



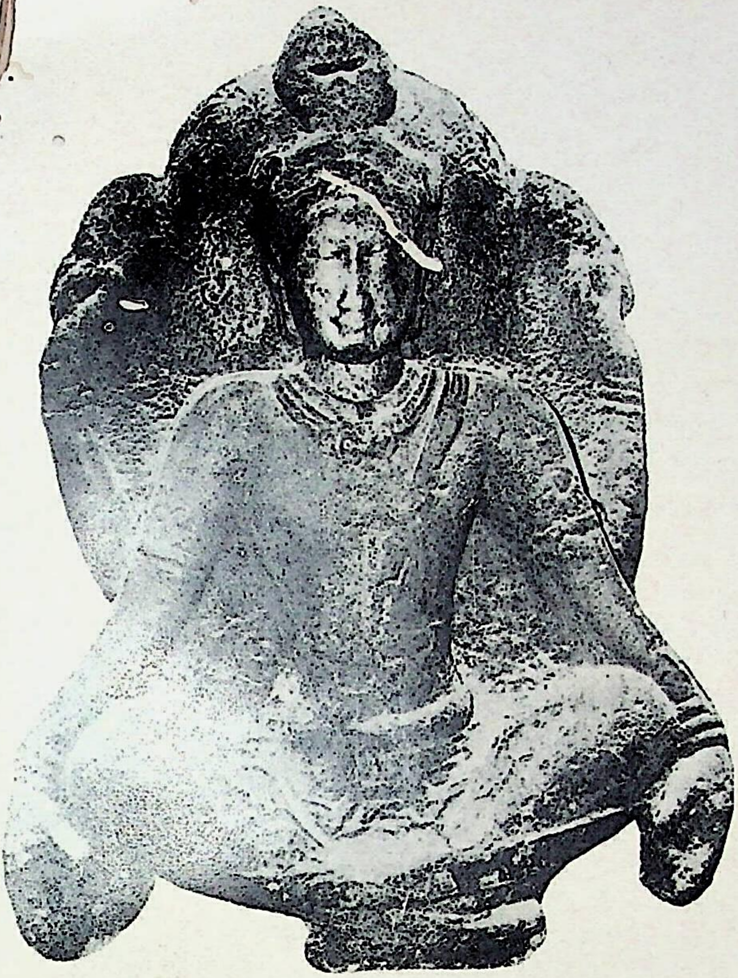
76. Durga, Nolamba, now in the Siva temple at Thiruvadigai.



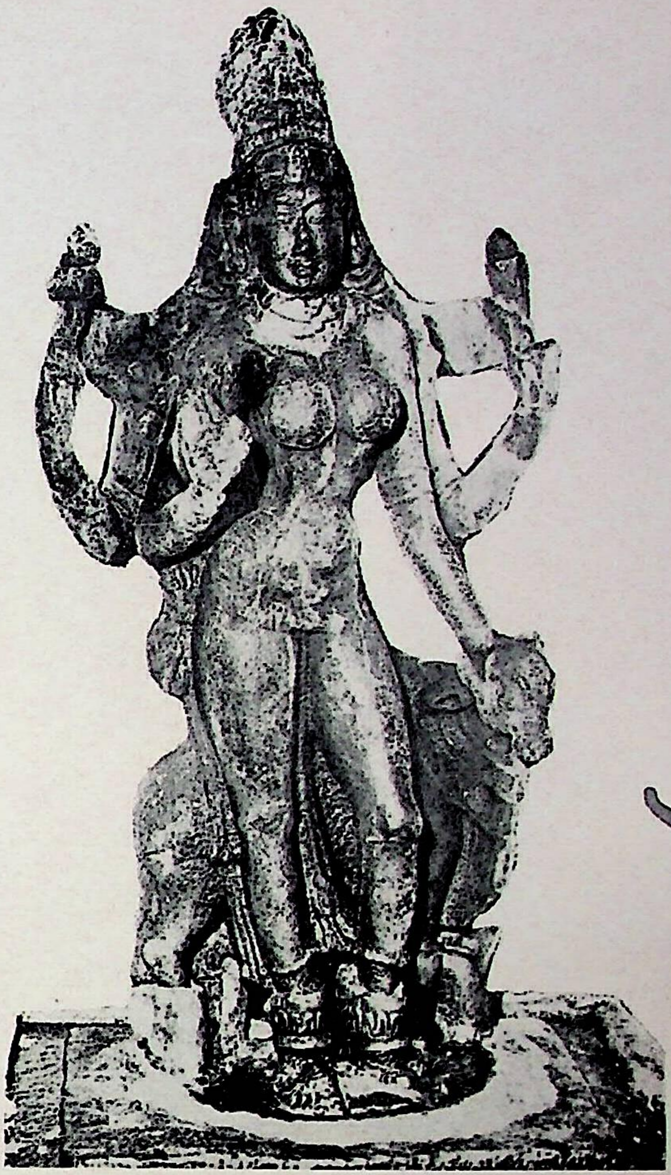
77. Devi enshrined in the sanctum holding *akshamala* and a flower in the upper arm.



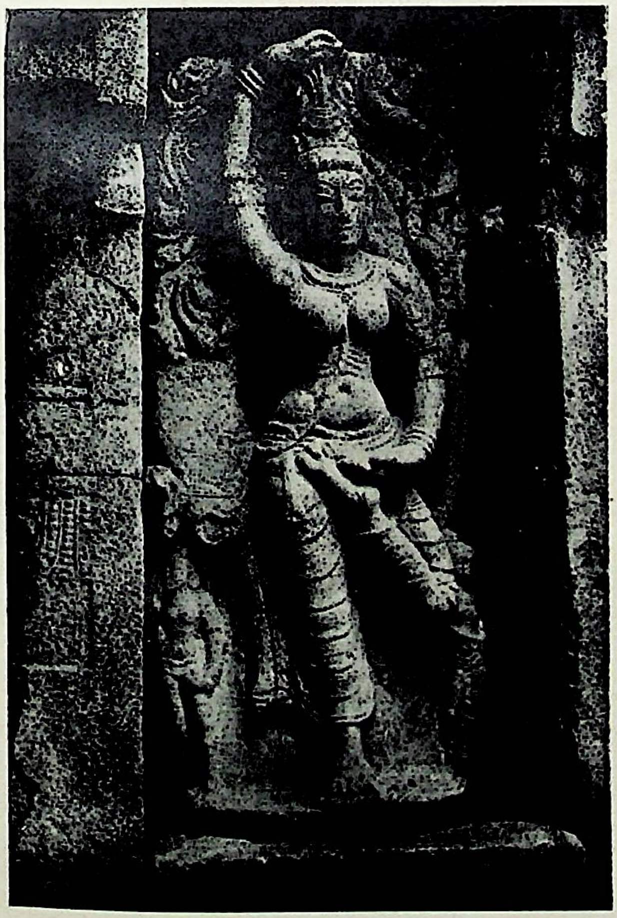
78. Devi in the sanctum, holding flowers in both the arms.



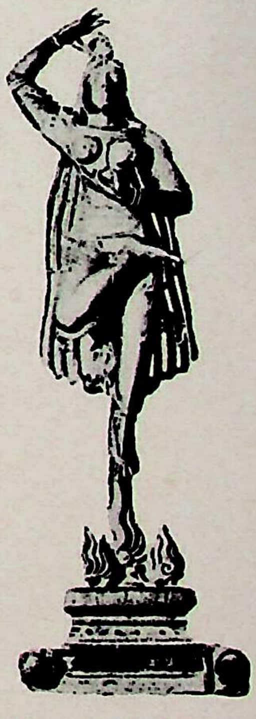
84. Siva as Gananatha heading Saptamatas. Thanjavur-Early Chola, 9th cent. A.D.



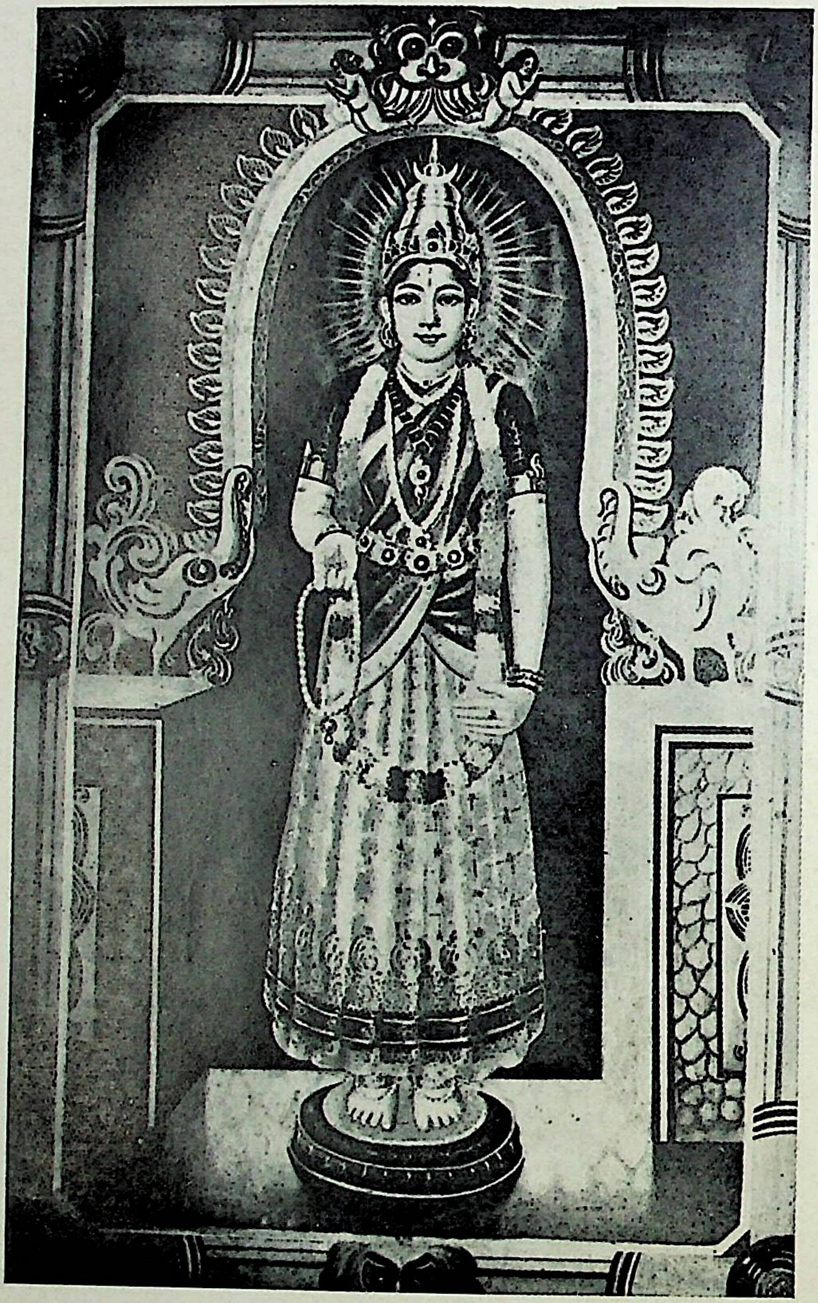
79. Devi enshrined in the Amman temple, Kalantai near Pollachi, Later Chola, 13th cent. A.D.



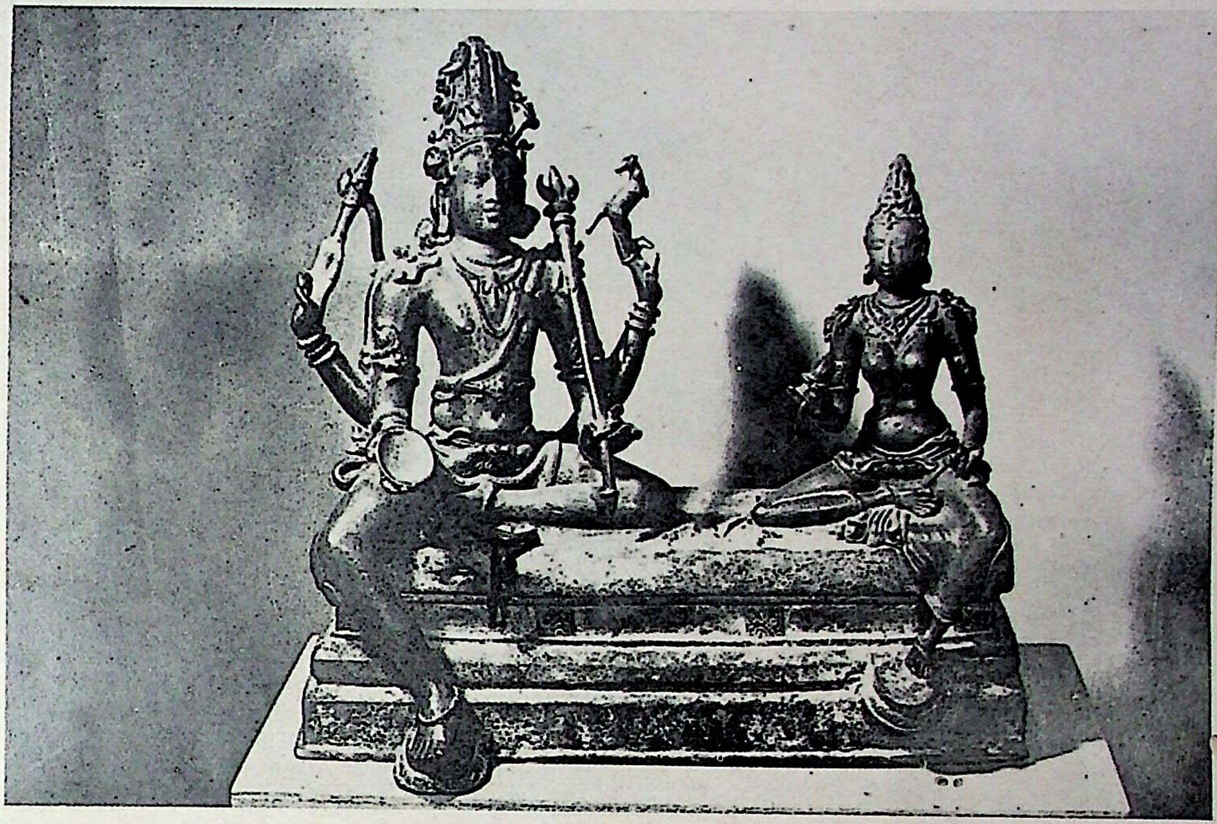
80. Devi doing *tapas* often called Tapas Kamakshi, stone, Later Chola, 12th cent. A.D.



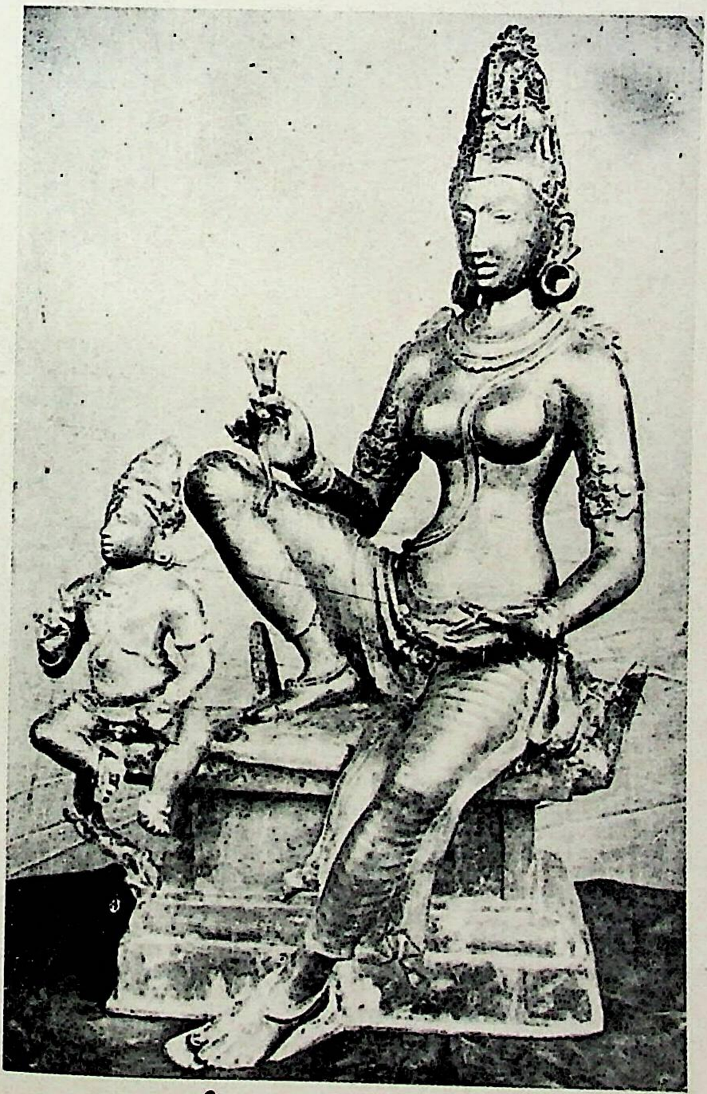
81. *Tapas*-Kamakshi, Bronze, Mangadu temple, 18th cent. A.D.



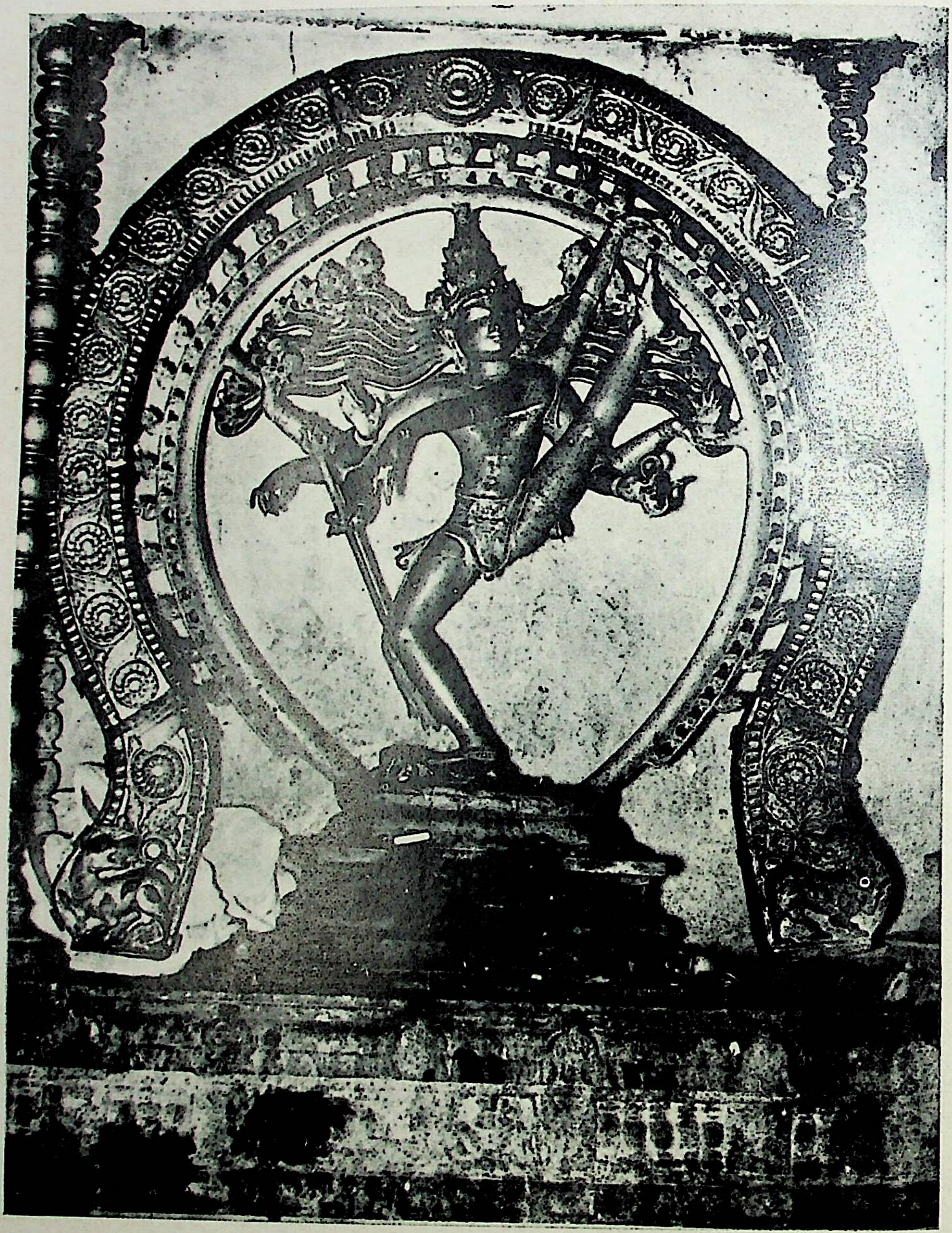
82. A modern painting of Kanya Kumari the presiding deity of Kanya Kumari.



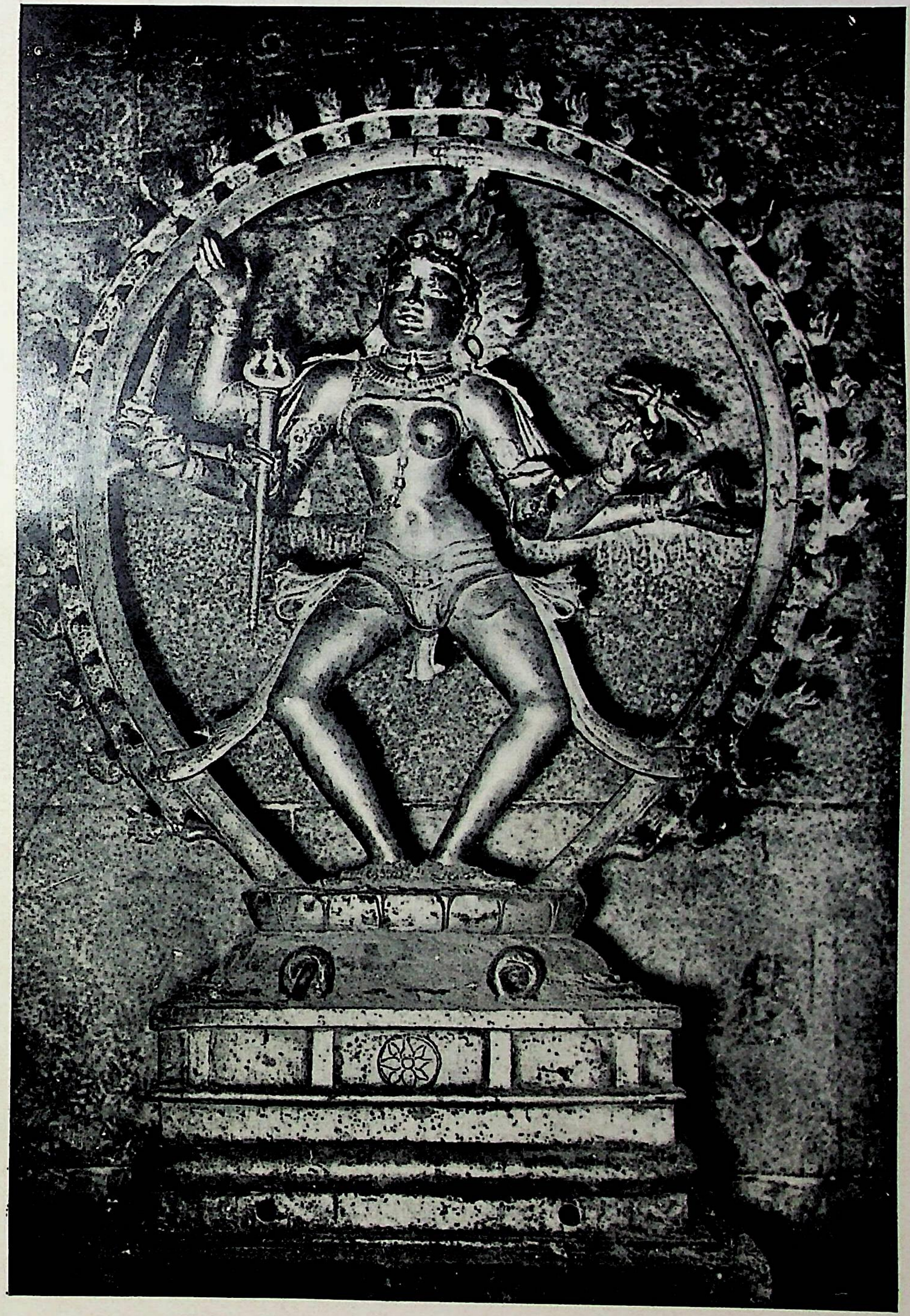
83. Somaskanda, Bronze, Pallava, Thiruvalangadu, 8th cent. A.D.



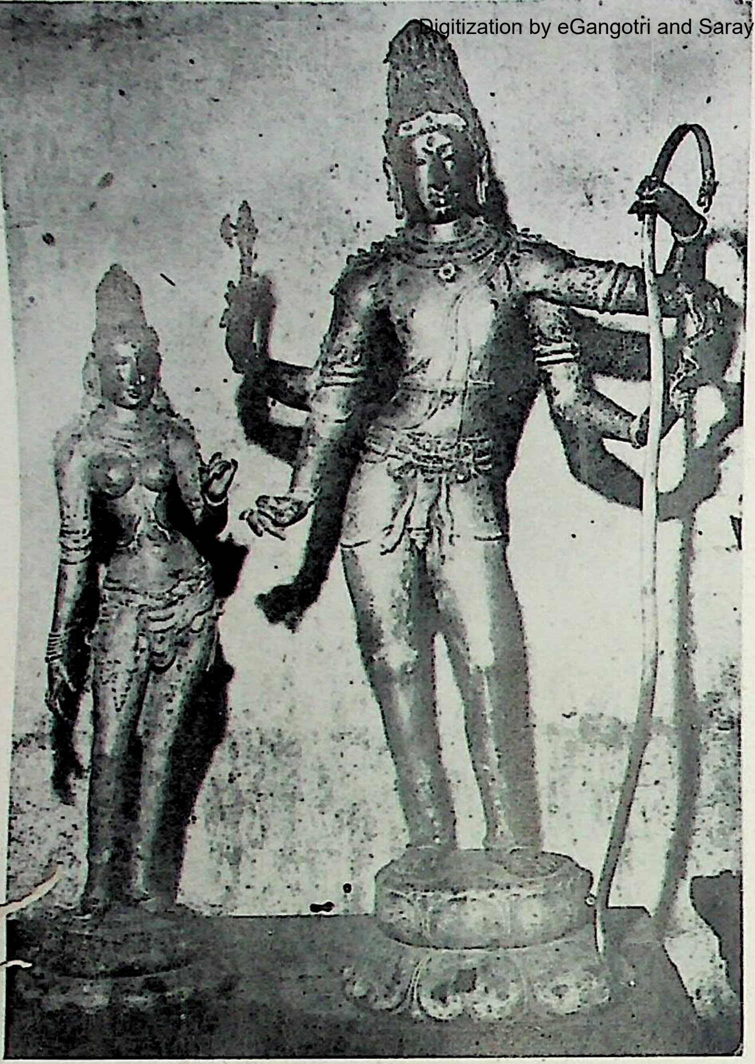
85. Guhambika, Bronze, Pallavanesvaram, 9th cent. A.D.



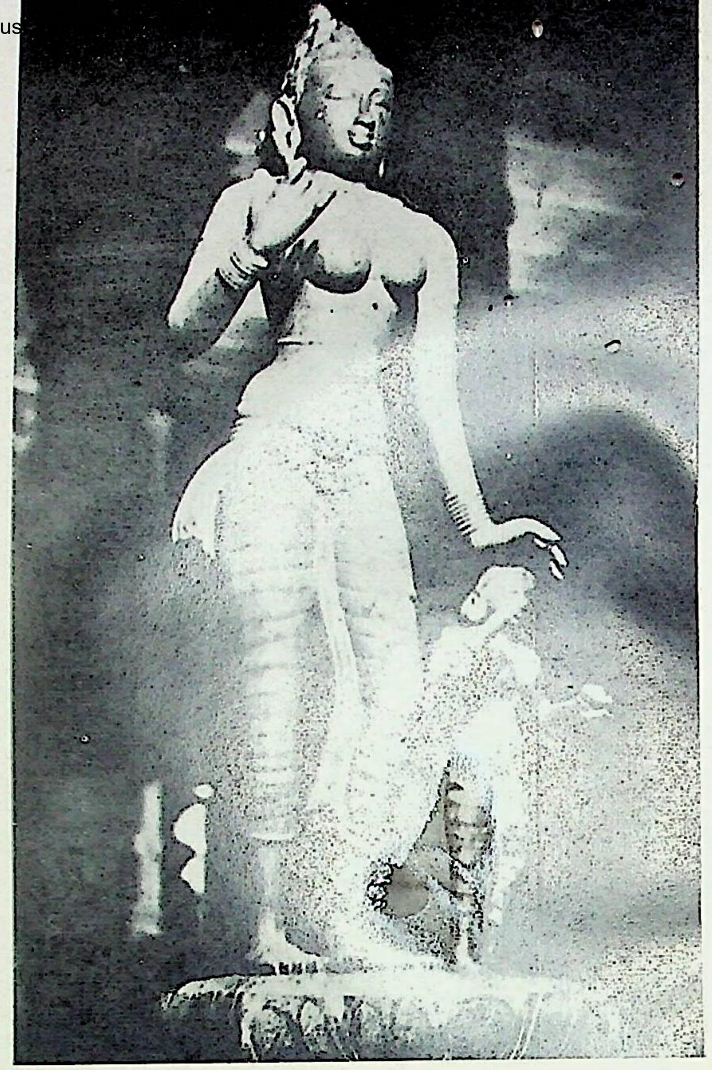
88. Urdhava Tandava Siva, Bronze, Thiruvalangadu, Chola, 10th cent.



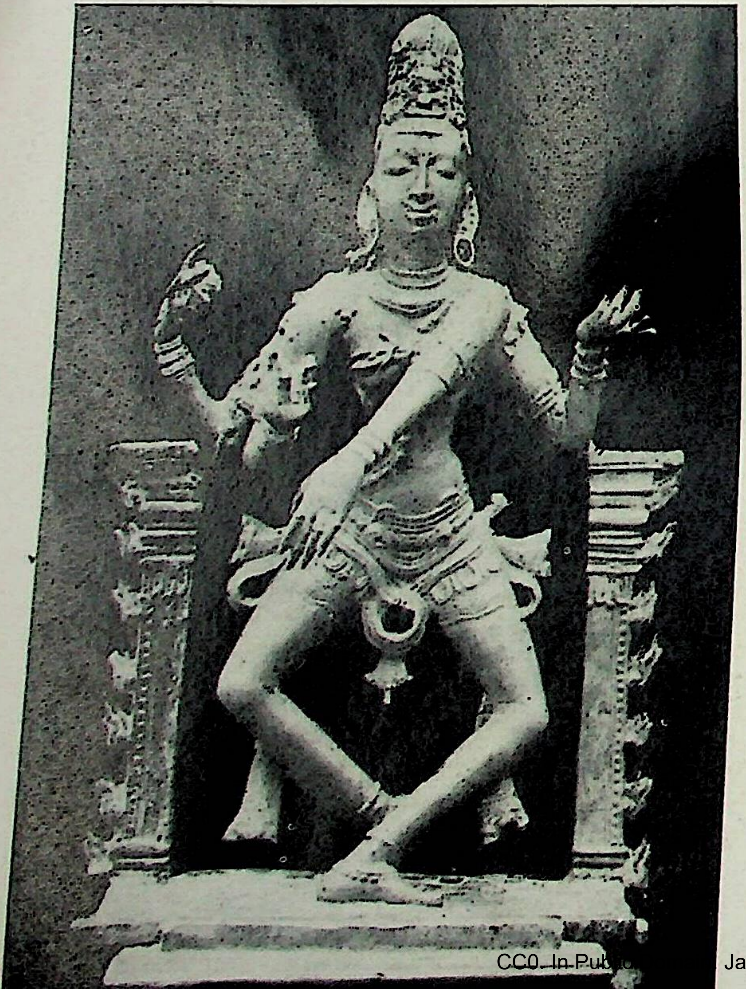
89. Kali, Bronze, Chola, 11th cent., Thrivalangadu.



86. Tripura vijaya and Tripurasundari-Bronze-Konerirajapuram, Chola, 10th cent. A.D.

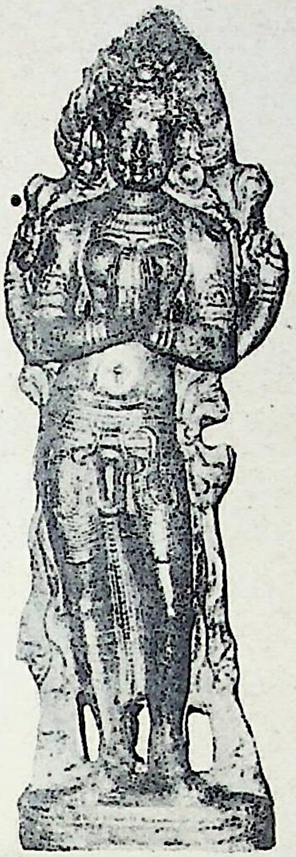


87. Tripurasundari, Bronze-Siva temple-Kodumudi-Kongunadu, 10th cent. A.D.

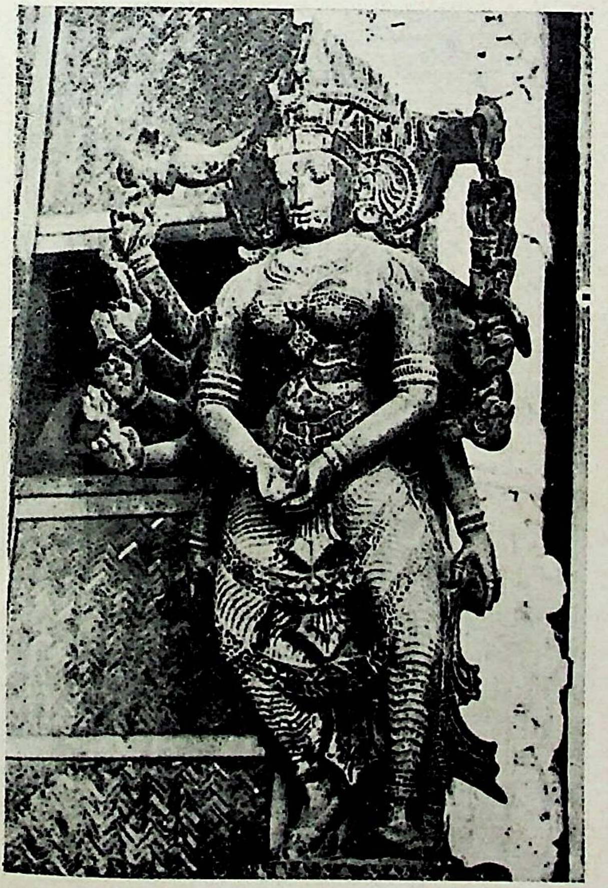


90. Kali, Bronze, Kolamali Amman temple, Mylapore, Chola, early 10th cent. A.D.

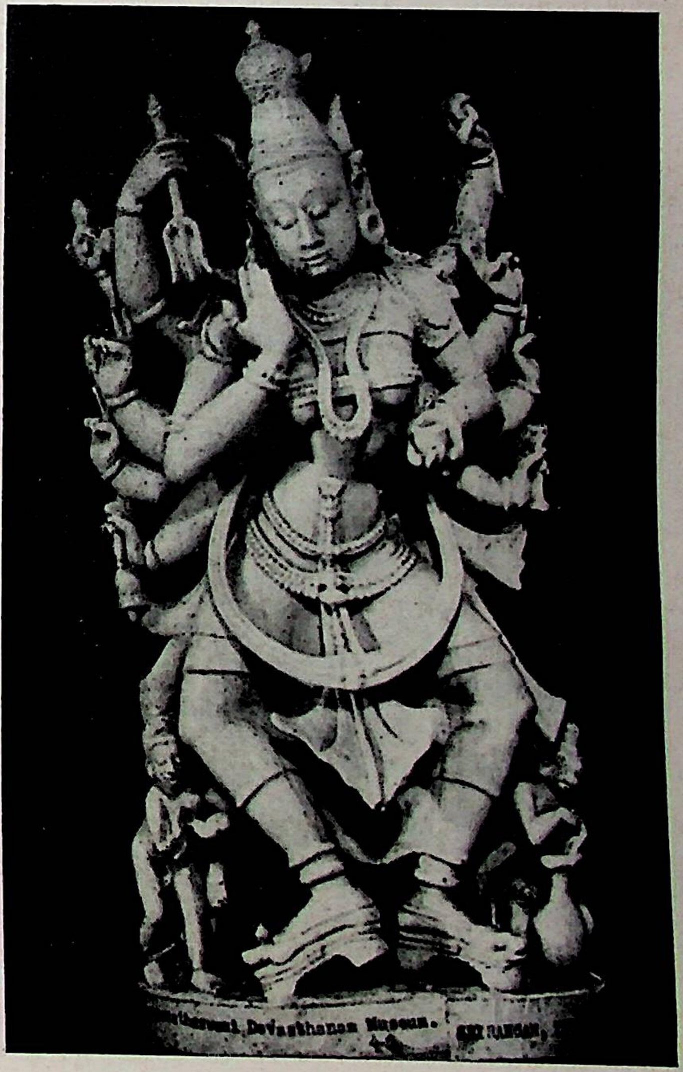
CC0. In Pub Jangamwadi Math Collection, Varanasi



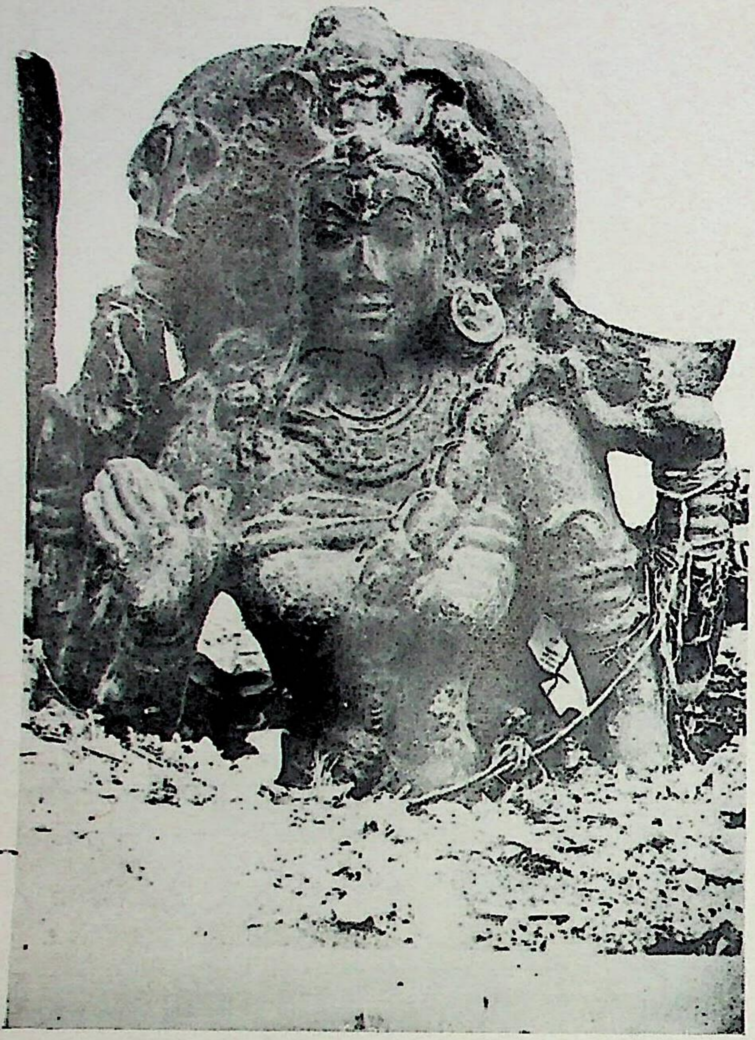
91. Kali standing with folded arms Melakkadambur Later Chola, 10th cent. A.D.



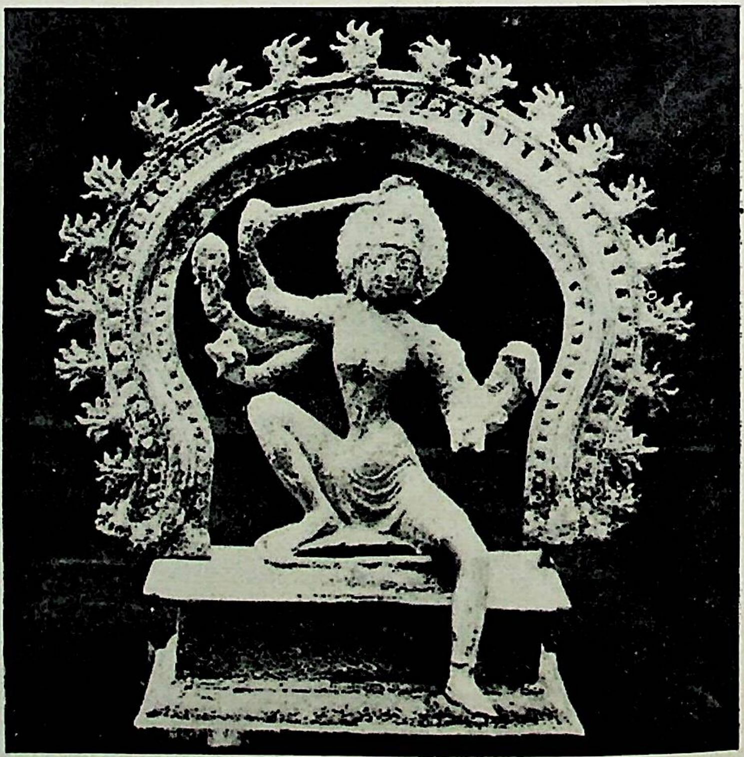
92. Kali-stone, Madurai, Nayak, 17th cent. A.D.


Devasthanam Museum.

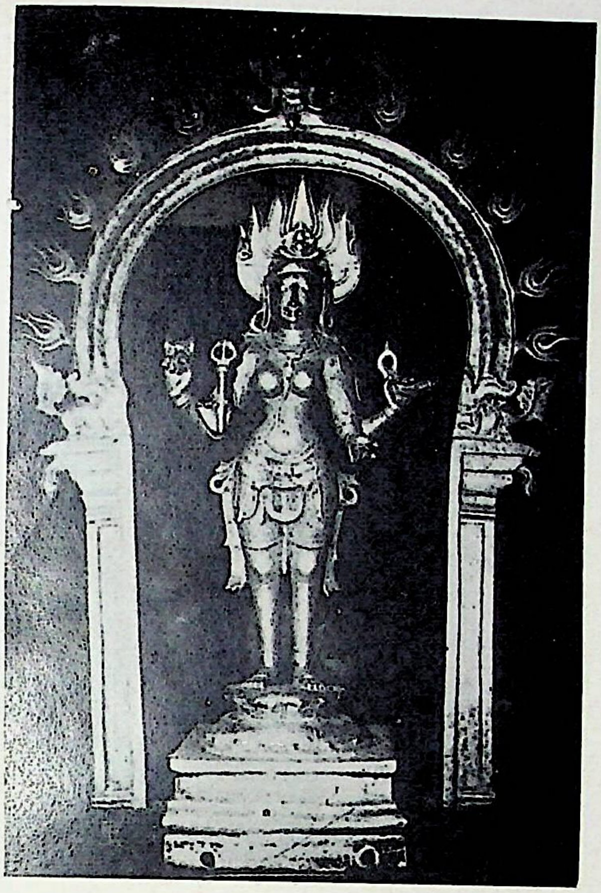
93. Kali-ivory-Srirangam Museum-Madurai Nayak 17th cent. A.D.



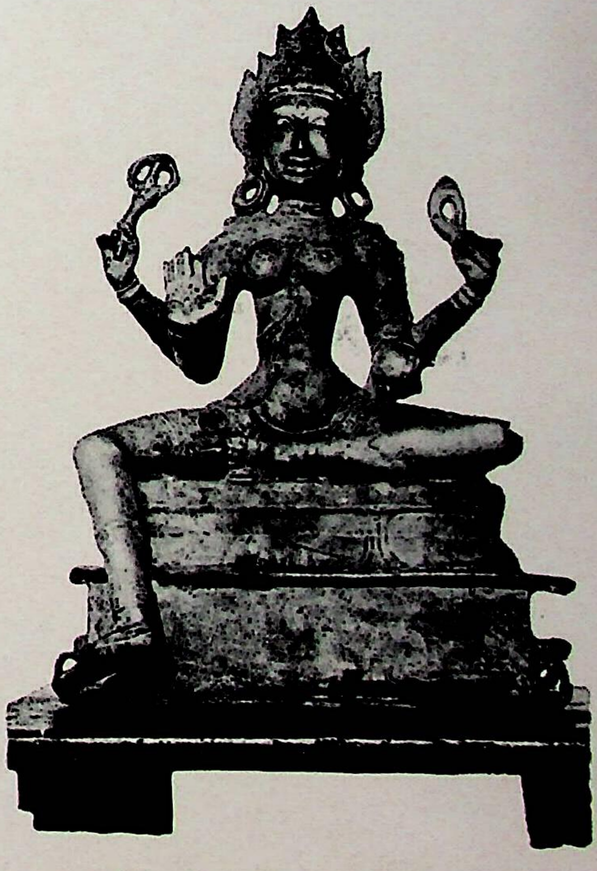
94. Kali-stone, Chola, Tiruvorriyur, 11th cent. A.D.



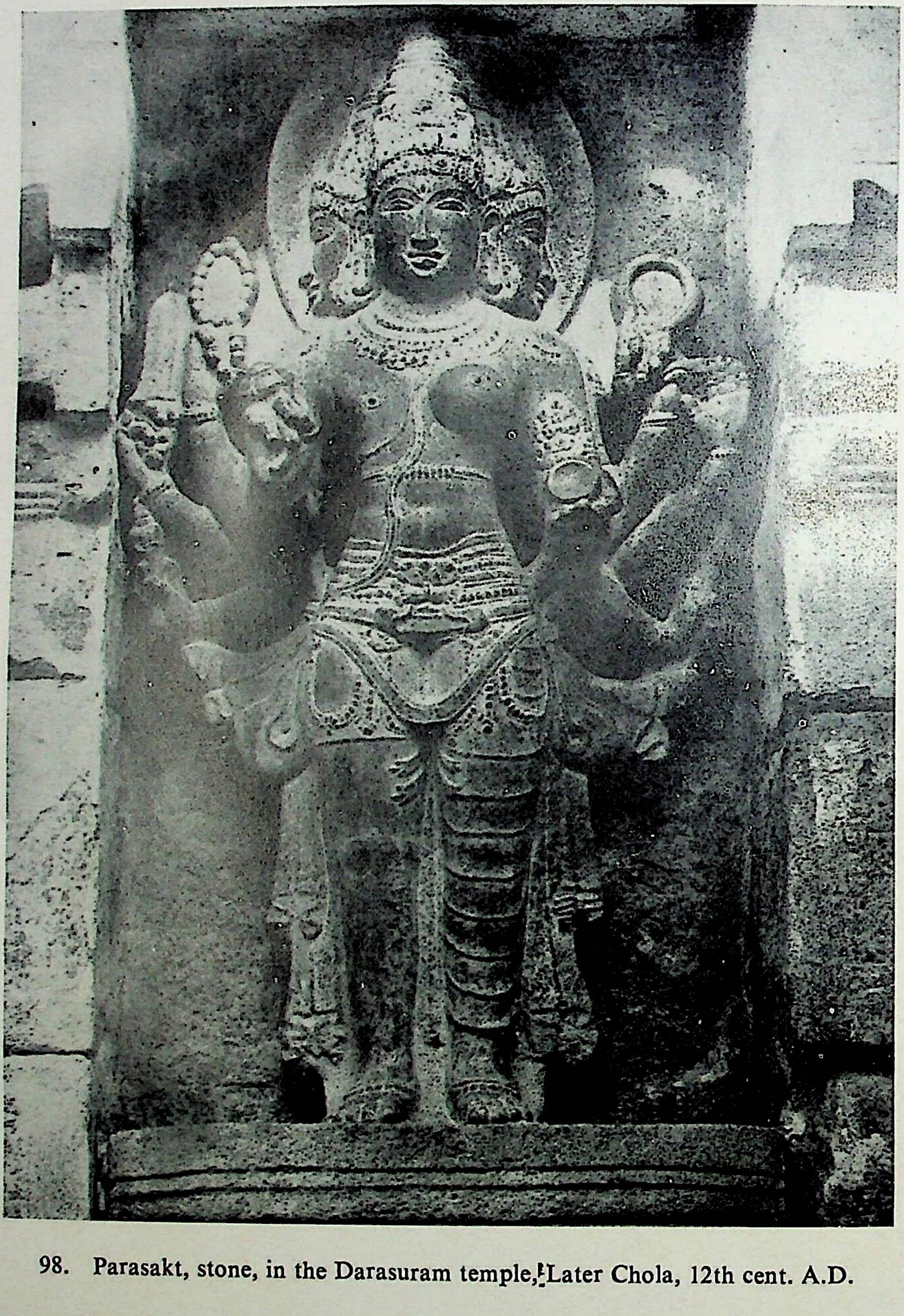
95. Kali, Bronze guilded with gold from Mysore region.



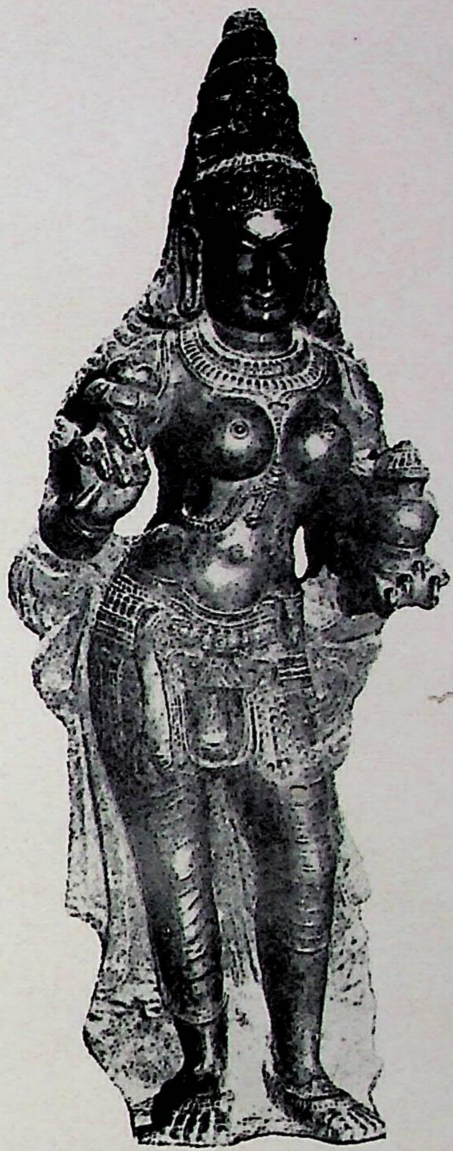
96. Kali, Bronze, 17th cent. A.D.



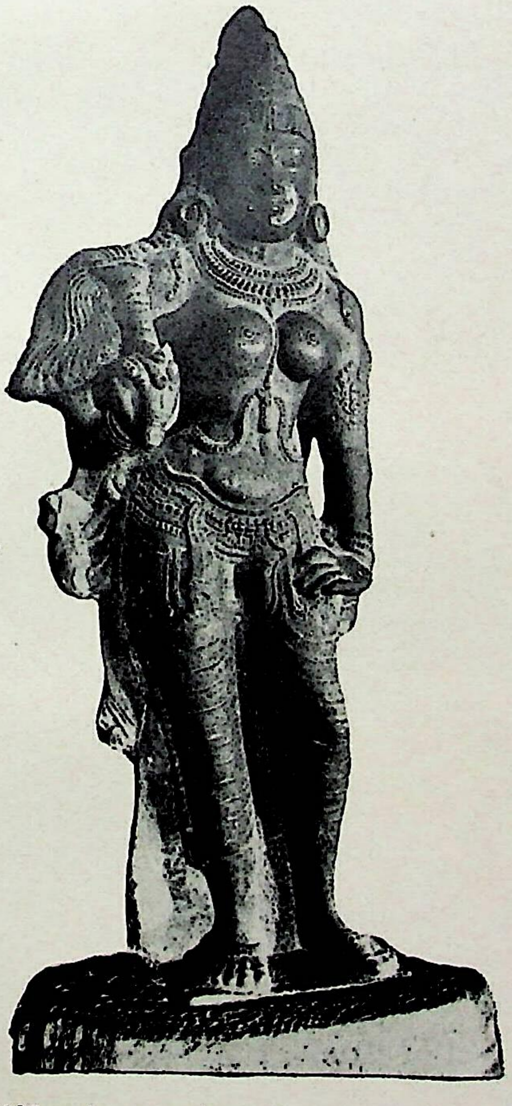
97. Kali, Bronze, 17th cent.



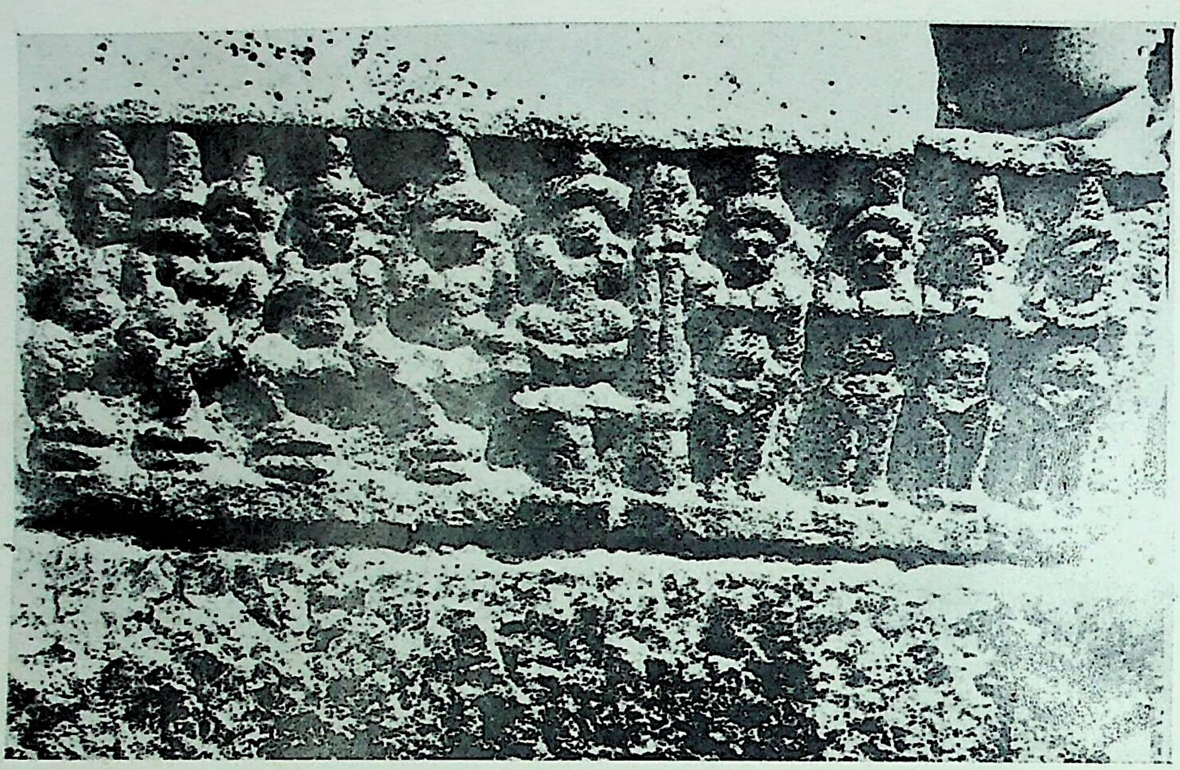
98. Parasakt, stone, in the Darasuram temple, Later Chola, 12th cent. A.D.



99. Maha Maya sakti-stone Siva temple-Darasuram, Later Chola-12th cent.



100. An attendent, Darasuram, Later Chola, 12th cent. A.D.



101. Sati stone, from Tenneri, depicting Brahma, Sivalinga, Uma, Subramanya, Narasimha, Srivatsa, the two arms, and two heros flanked by females.

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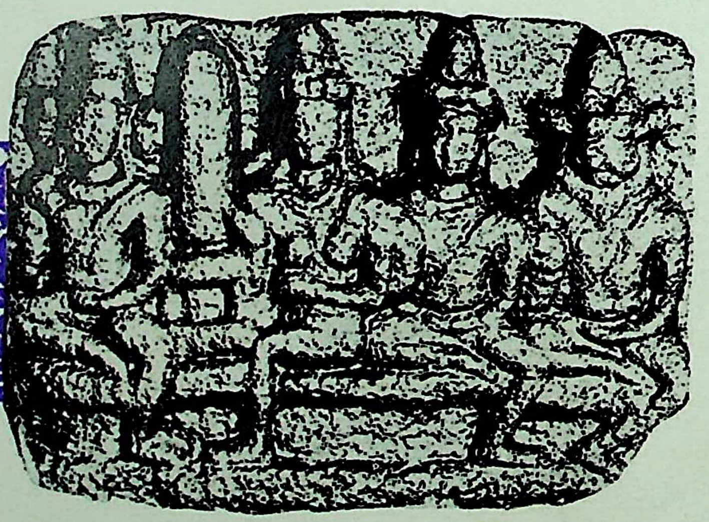

102. Sati Panel, stone, Munnur, Braham, Linga, Parvati, Narasimha.